

103k

# DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

ON THE

## NEW TESTAMENT.

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By JOHN GILLIES,  
One of the Ministers of Glasgow.

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Scripturæ tuæ sunt castæ deliciae meæ.  
AUGUSTIN.

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TO THE  
CONGREGATION  
OF THE

College-Church of Glasgow.

**I**N the following meditations you are supposed to join with me. And I hope many of you really did so, when part of them was delivered in your hearing, in the ordinary course of reading and expounding the New Testament, and in praying over what was read. If they shall, by the divine blessing, be of the least use to you, or to any who may be willing to improve them in an attempt to read the sacred writings with prayer  
A and



and personal application, the publication of them will not be in vain ; for certainly “ the man is blessed “ that walketh not in the counsel “ of the ungodly, nor standeth in “ the way of sinners, nor sitteth in “ the seat of the scornful. But “ whose delight is in the law of “ the Lord, in which he meditates “ day and night.” May we all thus be blessed, and may his statutes be our songs in the house of our pilgrimage !

JOHN GILLIES.

P R E-



## P R E F A C E.

**W**ITHOUT a devotional spirit there is no real religion. And this spirit is in danger of enthusiasm, unless directed by the word of God.

If other books are better relished than the Bible, our devotion cannot be right.

One of the best ways of studying divinity, is to study the scriptures themselves. And one of the best means of understanding the scriptures is prayer.

“ We should turn (says a pious writer)  
“ the word of God into prayer : our hearts  
“ should echo to it.”

vi P R E F A C E.

If this course was more generally followed, perhaps it might lessen the number of religious controversies.

But it may be said, “ Why should any “ thing of this kind be published ? Ought “ not every man to meditate and pray over “ the scriptures for himself ? ” Undoubtedly he ought. But there is ground to fear that many, through inconsideration or diffidence, hardly make any attempt this way. If such persons are willing to try it, ’tis pity they should not have some examples, if not to assist, yet to excite them ; at least to show them the road, that they may walk in it themselves. And this is all that the few following meditations pretend to do ; to point out one of the pleasant and safe paths of true religion, which deserves to be more frequented.

Many books have been written upon the scriptures by way of exposition, harmony, criticism, &c. all which are useful in their kind. But after every help that can be obtained

P R E F A C E.      vii

tained from men, it remains still to make our application to the Father of lights, that he would be pleased to give us, in the use of these means, such instructions and impressions as, upon the whole, he would have us to receive from his own word.

In the book of creation are passages hard to be understood. So are there in the scriptures. Yet much good may be derived from these, if they are improved in the way of meditation and prayer, for the mortification of pride and vain curiosity, and the nourishment of the amiable graces of adoration and submission due from every created mind to infinite wisdom.

There are two remarkable differences betwixt the scriptures, and all other books. First, the assistance of the Spirit of God is necessary, rightly to understand and relish them. And, in the next place, if we read them ever so often, we shall always find something new. We shall never be able  
fully



viii P R E F A C E.

fully to extract the sweetness of these flowers of paradise.

To conclude ; the author would beg leave humbly to recommend this exercise to young preachers, as a very profitable way of employing their time, because it serves at once to give them right views of the scriptures for their own salvation, and to furnish them with proper food for the flock of Christ.

He begs leave also to recommend this method of reading the scriptures with prayer, to Students of Theology, as one of the best ways to settle their principles, and to make the proper improvement of all other knowledge. He can venture to assure them that upon trial, if their hearts be in the work, they will find it the pleasantest, and, by the blessing of God, the most useful of all studies.

Lastly, he would recommend this way of meditation and prayer on the scriptures, to  
Christians

# P R E F A C E. ix

Christians in general, as a source of the truest wisdom, and of the most rational and pure delight, which it is not in the power of the world to deprive them of; and as an excellent mean of promoting that temper and conduct which will ever be the best answer to the objections of Infidels, and may, by the blessing of God, serve to remove their prejudices against Christianity,

He begs leave also to recommend this method of reading the scriptures with prayer, to students of Theology, as one of the best ways to settle their principles, and to make the proper improvement of all other knowledge. He can venture to assure them that upon trial, if their hearts be in the work, they will find it the pleasantest, and, by the blessing of God, the most useful of all studies.

Easily, he would recommend this way of meditation and prayer on the scriptures, to  
**D E V O -**  
 Christians.





## DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

ON THE

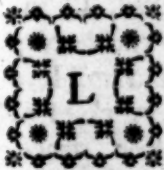
## NEW TESTAMENT.

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M A T T H E W.

C H A P. I.

Verse 1 to 18. " The book of the generation  
" of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son  
" of Abraham." &c.

ORD JESUS! we come to learn  
heavenly wisdom at thy feet. To  
whom shall we go? Thou hast the  
words of eternal life. Be pleased to  
open our understandings, that we  
may rightly understand the meaning of the Scrip-  
tures. Graciously teach us by thy holy Spirit.  
Our minds are naturally dark, and our hearts  
corrupt: we would not therefore lean to our own  
judgment, but desire to be taught of God. We  
have here thy pure word, which is profitable to  
teach, to reprove, to correct, and to instruct us  
in righteousness: we would read and search it,  
B looking



looking up to thee. Lord, make us to know the truth; and by the truth, deliver us from the bondage of sin, that we may serve thee in holiness and righteousness, during our pilgrimage upon earth, and may be prepared for that glorious life in thy presence in heaven.

At the beginning of thy genealogy, there is particular notice taken of thy descent from Abraham and David. We would take occasion, from this, to implore thy pity and help and blessing. For it was said to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed". And it was prophesied of the Son of David, "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight." Glory to thy name; these gracious promises have already been fulfilled in multitudes of perishing souls. O fulfil them on us also.

Here we have the names of some who were great sinners, as well as of others who were eminent saints. What condescension in thee, O infinitely high and holy God! to assume the nature of man, after it was so miserably polluted! Here also we see the names of some, the very chief of sinners, made monuments of thy free grace. This is great encouragement to such as we are. And, lastly, we see that relation to thee, by the flesh, was not always accompanied with salvation; but, blessed be thy name, we are sure, "Who-soever doth the will of God, the same is thy mother and sister and brother."

Verse 18 to 21. "She was found with child  
"of the Holy Ghost." &c.

What a mystery is here! What a stone of stumbling to the carnal mind, and the disputer of this world! But we rest in the words of the angel to the blessed virgin: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee; shall be called the Son of God." Thou, O Lord Jesus, art the only begotten Son of God; one with thy Father: and even in thy human nature, thou art the Son of God in such a singular way, as no other is. Yet to as many as believe in thee, thou hast given the privilege of becoming by adoption and by regeneration the sons of God. O heavenly Father, send forth the spirit of thy Son into our hearts. Give us to know in our experience what it is to be born from above, to be born of thy Spirit. We ask not to be great or high in this world: Make us thy children whom thou hast predestinated to be conformed to the image of thy Son.

Verse 21. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus."

Blessed name! sweetest of all names! Jesus! Saviour! Grant us this great, this precious salvation, which thou bringest. Save us from our sins; from the guilt, and from the power of them. Thou camest to save thy people from their enemies, and from the hand of all that hate them. Our sins are our worst enemies; they are the real, the great enemies from whom we need deliverance. Sicknes, pain, poverty, contempt, death, deliver us from these or not, as thy perfect

wisdom sees best: but in any wise deliver us from our sins. Save us from a bad conscience; from guilty terrors; from tyrannical lusts; from the power of Satan; from the sting of death, and from hell. Praise, praise to thee for the hope of so glorious salvation. We rejoice that it is said, "Thou shalt save thy people from their sins." This salvation is not by the power of man, but by thy right hand, O Son of God; and thou wilt accomplish what thou hast undertaken. And though thy salvation was first sent to the Jews, who were then thy peculiar people, thou commandedst it afterwards to be published to all nations under heaven, that whosoever believeth in thy name may be saved. O when thou savest such multitudes, save us also, for thy mercy's sake. Thou hast said, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." We ask, Lord; we seek; we would earnestly knock for thy salvation. Be it unto us according to thy word. We trust in thee, who camest to seek and save that which was lost.

Verse 22 to 25. "They shall call his name  
"Emmanuel," &c.

This is another of thy amiable names; Emmanuel, God with us; God in our nature; God tabernacled among us; yea, God dwelling in our hearts as our God. How happy are they to whom thou art Emmanuel! Amidst the greatest dangers they may sing, "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea. The Lord is for us, who  
"can

"can be against us." Blessed be thy name; thou art thus Emmanuel to all who believe in thee: for thou dwellest in their hearts by faith. Thou makest each of them a temple of the living God. What honour! what safety! what felicity! O come thou, King of Glory, into our souls, and make them temples to thee. Drive out every thing that defiles them, and fill them with thy presence. Open by thy divine power the everlasting doors, and take full possession of these souls which thou hast made for thyself. Let them be parts of thy Zion, of which thou hast said, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it."

## C H A P. II.

Verse 1 to 13. "There came wise men from  
"the east to Jerusalem," &c.

These men would, no doubt, be much censured for taking so long a journey to see one, of whose birth they were advertised by the appearance of a star; but they were led by God, and were able to give a reason of their conduct to those who were capable of judging it. Behold them falling down and worshipping, and opening their treasures to present their most costly gifts. Let us imitate their example. O King of Israel, we worship thee; we adore that divine love that brought thee from the throne of God, to be a poor infant lying in a manger. We have no treasures to give thee; but we know thou needest none. The sacrifices acceptable to thee are a broken heart; a broken and a contrite spirit thou wilt not despise. Give us such hearts that we



may present them to thee. Thou art now exalted in glory; but we would never forget the deep abasement of thy infancy. Because for the glory of God and the salvation of sinful men, thou thus humbledst thyself, let every tongue proclaim thee worthy of all the strength, and power, and riches, and wisdom, and honour, and glory, and blessing, which thy Father hath given thee.

Verse 13 to 23. "Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." &c.

How soon did thy sufferings commence! Thy life was sought in thy infancy; thy parents obliged to flee with thee into a foreign land; and at thy return thy habitation was in Nazareth, out of which it was thought no good thing could come. Lord, why should we love this world, which was so unkind to thee from first to last. Let us not seek its favour, but rather labour to get safely through its snares, that we may be with thee in heaven.

### C H A P. III,

Verse 1 to 11. "John the Baptist came preaching, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." &c.

The kingdom of heaven is now actually come. Thou art exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins. Lord, give us saving repentance, to forsake every sin with grief and hatred, and to turn to thee with our whole hearts, as we desire just now to do. Let every high thing be brought low, and every imagination and desire be subjected to thy obedience.

ence. And cause us to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, that we may not be hewn down and cast into the fire. Make us to abound in all the fruits of righteousness which, by thee, are to the praise and glory of God.

Verse 11 to 13. "He shall baptize you with  
"the Holy Ghost," &c.

Lord, we were baptized in thy name in our infancy; and many of us have often devoted ourselves to thee according to thy new covenant. O baptize us with the Holy Ghost. It is said, "Thy fan is in thy hand, and thou wilt thoroughly  
"purge thy floor." Lord, make us that true wheat which thou wilt gather into thy garner, while the chaff shall be burnt up with unquenchable fire.

Verse 13 to 17. "Thus it becometh us to  
"fulfil all righteousness." &c.

We rejoice, O Lord, that thou hast fulfilled all righteousness: thou art therefore a fit Saviour for unrighteous and guilty transgressors. Thou art the Lord our Righteousness. Heavenly Father, be merciful to us sinners, and graciously accept us in thy beloved Son, on whom thy Spirit descended, and a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am  
"well pleased." O be well pleased with us for his sake,

## M A T T H E W,

### C H A P. IV.

Verse 1 to 11. " Then was Jesus led up of  
" the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempt-  
" ed of the devil." &c.

We are here informed that thou thyself wast tempted by the wicked one: no wonder he should assault thy poor weak disciples, in whom he finds, alas, too much fuel for his temptations; but in thee he found none. We beseech thee, O gracious Saviour, either to keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted. Glory to thy name for submitting to be tempted for our sakes: hereby thou hast both conquered our grand enemy, and acquired experience of temptation, that thou mightest better feel for us when we are under it. This is unspeakable comfort in the hour of trial.

Thou knowest we are not able, many times, to distinguish the temptations of Satan from our own corruptions: but they are equally our enemies. May we be equally concerned to be delivered from both; and make us sensible that alluring temptations are more dangerous than those that are hideous and terrifying.

We see, O wise Lord, that the weapon by which thou repelledst the temptations of Satan, was the word of God. Though the adversary endeavoured to wrest it from thee, and even to wrest it to inforce his temptations, thou wast not discouraged, but still hadst recourse to the written word. Lord, make us well acquainted with this heavenly weapon. And may the account of the particular temptations, wherewith Satan dared to attack thee, and thy answers to them, be blessed for our direction and comfort, and for the benefit of all  
who

who are tempted. May all such afflicted souls remember, that "The man is blessed who endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which thou hast promised to them that love thee."

Verse 11. "Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

When Satan found thou wast not to be conquered by his most exquisite temptations, he left thee for a time; but he returned, when he thought thy great sufferings would give him any advantage. Though he should forbear tempting us for a while, we cannot expect it will be long so: he will probably be troublesome to us as long as we live; and, perhaps, will seek to disturb and terrify us when we come to die. Lord help us to keep our eyes fixed on thee, who knowest how to deliver us from the roaring lion.

We bless thee, that as the angels came and ministered to thee, so they are appointed to minister to all who are heirs of salvation, and to encamp about them that fear God, to protect and deliver them. It is a great comfort, that when the infernal spirits are seeking our ruin, the spirits of heaven are employed in defending us, and doing us good. Lord, give thine angels charge over us to keep us in all our ways; but, above all, do thou thyself keep us, O Keeper of Israel, who never sleepest or sleepest. Then the sun shall not smite us by day, nor the moon by night. We shall not need to fear the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor destruction that wasteth at noon-day. Thou, O Lord, wilt be our refuge; thou, O Most High, our habitation. There shall



shall no evil befall us, neither shall any plague come nigh our dwelling. We shall tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shall we trample under feet.

Verse 12 to 19. "The people which sat in darkness, saw great light: and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." &c.

To sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, must be a very dismal situation; yet no other is the condition of every soul that wants thy heavenly light, O Sun of Righteousness! All our souls were once in this benighted state. If thou hast been pleased to give us some glimpse of the light of life, what ground of praise! O make us to walk as children of the light, and to rejoice in thy light, which is far sweeter to the eye of the soul, than the light of the sun is to the eye of the body. When shall we see thy light in heaven, in the new Jerusalem, of which thy word says, "It has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it; because the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light of it."

Verse 19 to 23. "And he saith unto them, Follow me," &c.

When thou, Lord, saidst to these men, "Follow me," they could not resist thy call, but immediately left their boats, and nets, and friends, and followed thee. Give us to feel the like powerful attraction of thy grace, Lord Jesus! Call us to follow thee whithersoever thou goest: make us to see what a blessed thing it is to give up all for thee, and to follow thee through good report and

and bad report, through honour and dishonour, health and sickness, life and death. Thou hast said, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; " and where I am, there also my servant shall be, " and him will my Father honour." Lord, shew us the way wherein thou wouldst have us to walk. We follow thee. Draw us, and we will run after thee in the way of all thy commandments, when thou hast enlarged our hearts. Happy disciples! who accompanied thee in all places: though frequently exposed to the inclemency of the air, and to the want of external conveniencies, thy presence supplied all. And though sometimes they wanted thy bodily presence, they never wanted thy protection; and thou appearedst to them for their comfort in time of their greatest need. Lord, why may not we now enjoy something of their happiness? Thy human nature is indeed in heaven; but thy divine presence is here. And thou hast said, "Blessed " are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief. We desire to walk continually in thy presence, and to hearken to the voice of thy word, and follow thee night and day.

Verse 23 to 25. "And Jesus went about all " Galilee, preaching and healing," &c.

Thus, Lord, thou wentest about, doing good, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease. O heal our souls! they have naturally no health nor soundness in them. The whole head is sick; the whole heart is faint. O heal the blindness of our minds, the sinful desires and passions of our hearts, our vain and evil thoughts  
of

of various kinds. They brought to thee all sick persons that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those that were possessed with devils, and thou healedst them. No disease was incurable to thee : every kind of pain and possession gave way to thy powerful word. How comfortable is it, that thou never sentest any away without a cure ! Thou seest the wounds, and sores, and plagues of our hearts. O Divine Healer, pity us ! Behold what a miserable condition we are in. We know, if thou wilt, thou canst heal us : we trust thou wilt do it, compassionate Saviour ! We will look to thee, as the Israelites did to the brazen serpent, and will wait for thy salvation.

## C H A P. V.

Verse 1 to 3. " Blessed are the poor in spirit," &c.

Lord, make us to understand what we now read. Who are the poor in spirit, whom thou declarest to be blessed ? Are they not such as are sensible of their inward poverty, of their want of wisdom, of their want of righteousness, of their want of strength ? Lord, make us poor in spirit ; make us more and more sensible of our want of all inward good in ourselves, that we may come to thee, and out of thy fulness receive whatever we need. Save us from thinking that we are rich and full of goods, when we are poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked. Being sensible of our inward poverty, may we chearfully comply with thy gracious counsel, to buy of thee gold tried in the fire to enrich us,  
and

and white raiment to cover our nakedness, and eye-salve that we may see. Lord deliver us from pride and self-conceit.

Verse 4. "Blessed are they that mourn," &c.

They who mourn after a godly sort are undoubtedly included here. Sincere penitents, who mourn because they have been undutiful to so kind a Father, have wounded so gracious a Saviour, have grieved and vexed so compassionate a Comforter. The whole tenor of thy word shews, that they who thus sow in tears, shall reap in joy. And even they who mourn under thy afflicting hand, if their afflictions are sanctified to them, to convince them of the vanity of the world, and the evil of sin, and the inestimable value of an interest in God, must be sharers of this blessedness. How blind is the natural man to this! He thinks the only happy persons are they who live in continual pleasure and gaiety. But we are informed by thy word, that weeping is often better than mirth, and that the false joys of the unconverted are far worse than any sorrow. Lord deliver us from these false joys, and give us by thy Spirit the solid comfort that flows from peace with God through thy mediation, from thy image on our hearts, and from the chearful hope of a blessed immortality.

Verse 5. "Blessed are the meek," &c.

Lord give us this blessed temper. Grant that we may learn of thee, who art meek and lowly in heart. Give us that true meekness which flows from deep humility. Give us what thy inspired apostle calls the meekness and gentleness of Christ;



Christ ; that meekness of wisdom which will make us easy in our own minds, and our behaviour edifying to others ; and which will lead us to the best enjoyment of the blessings of a present life, according to thy promise, that the meek shall inherit the earth. Oh thou meek divine Spirit ! give us this gracious disposition, which is one of thy fruits, and make us continually to watch against all kinds of anger and resentment, except what has sin for its object.

Verse 6. "Blessed are they that hunger and  
"thirst after righteousness," &c.

Blessed be thy name, O Lord, for this most comfortable promise. The covetous may thirst for gold, and the ambitious for honour and preferment, and the men of pleasure for sensual gratifications, and may all be disappointed : but if we hunger and thirst after righteousness, thou hast said we shall be filled. Lord, we hunger after an interest in thy righteousness to justify us, and after the righteousness of thy holy Spirit, that we may be sanctified. Increase this hunger and thirst more and more : satisfy our longing souls, according to thy gracious word.

Verse 7. "Blessed are the merciful," &c.

Lord give us a compassionate disposition, at the utmost distance from every kind of cruelty, in act or word. We often read, that thy bowels were moved with pity : Lord Jesus, let the same mind be in us. May we, by thy Spirit, put on bowels of mercies, forbearing and forgiving others in love, and ready to give all the help in our power to those that need it. We thank thee  
for

for every degree of mercifulness thou hast given any of us. Heavenly Father, give us more of this temper, by which we shall resemble thee, who art very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Verse 8. "Blessed are the pure in heart," &c.

O! that we had purity of heart. Thou who knowest what is in man, hast testified concerning the human heart, that out of it proceeds every thing that defiles the man. Alas! what evil thoughts and inclinations spring up from time to time in our hearts! O! deliver us from them. Lord, give us a new heart, with thy law written upon it. Give us a heart according to thy own heart. Oh when shall every sinful disposition be quite rooted out? We earnestly long for the happy time. In the mean time, we beg thou wouldst give us to keep our hearts with all diligence, and to strive against the first beginnings of sin.

Verse 8. "They shall see God."

Thou hast promised, that the pure in heart shall see God. Glorious reward! Where is there, or can there be, any honour so great, any sight so beautiful, any knowledge so pleasing and transporting? "To see God," all light is but darkness, all science is but ignorance, to this light. O Uncreated Light! O Eternal Love! how blessed are they who see thy face in heaven! Blessed also are they who see thy glory here on earth, by the light of thy gospel and the illumination of thy holy Spirit. Lord Jesus, thou hast said, "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal"

“veal him.” O shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. We know thou madest answer to Philip requesting this, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” Lord, give us then to keep thee continually in our eye by faith. In thee we see the wisdom, the power, the goodness, the holiness, the mercy, the condescension, the grace, the love, of thy Father. Blessed be God for humbling himself, and becoming incarnate, that poor sinful mortals might know him and see him. Now, Lord, we see thee by faith, and hope soon to see thee by open vision: but without holiness no man can see thee. If we have not some degree of heart purity, we but deceive ourselves in imagining we have fellowship with thee. Lord, purify our hearts by thy holy Spirit, and purify them more and more.

Verse 9. “Blessed are the peace-makers,” &c.

Lord, give us that inward peace which is the fruit of thy Spirit; peace with heaven through thy blood; peace in our own minds; and a disposition to live peaceably with all men. And may we be lovers of peace, and endeavour to reconcile those that are at variance. May we have this work at heart, as children of God: may we be animated in it by love to our heavenly Father, the God of peace, and to thee, O our Saviour, the great peace-maker betwixt heaven and earth, and to thy loving and peaceful Spirit; and by love to our brethren, whose strife and contention ought to give us pain, and their living in peace and love ought to be very pleasing to us. May we never seek to ourselves, or

others, that false deluding peace which favours the interests of sin, and takes away peace with thee : but may we always be zealous for true peace. May we have the wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Verse 10 to 13. "Blessed are the persecuted," &c.

Thou, O Lord, hast said, in another place, "If they persecute you in one city, flee to another." By comparing these words together, we learn, that we are not to seek persecutions and sufferings : but if in the course of thy providence they shall come upon us, we are to rejoice and be exceeding glad. Lord, give us strength and courage. Though it is very desirable to have a good name among all men, yet if ever it shall happen, that men shall revile us, and say all manner of evil against us falsely for thy sake, may we reckon it our highest honour. Thou hast in former times given to thy martyrs such enlivening views of the heavenly reward, and hast so supported them by the joy of the Holy Ghost, that they have been happy in the midst of tortures. Thou canst do the same thing for us, weak as we are, if ever we be called to suffer as they did. In the mean time, may we be daily martyrs in bearing the cross after thee, and crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts. Lord, do not deny us that grace which is necessary to support us under those inward conflicts.

Verse 13. "Ye are the salt of the earth," &c.

Salt gives a relish to what is insipid, and preserves from corruption. Lord, grant that our



conversation and the disposition of our minds may not be nauseous or insipid to thy beloved Spirit, as those of carnal and earthly men are; but may they be such as are acceptable to God through thy mediation, and edifying to men. O make our hearts right with thee; and let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth, but that which is good for the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers. And in our whole behaviour may we follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another. And help us ever to remember, that as salt, if it lose its flavour, is of all things in the world most useless, and incapable of being seasoned; so he who professeth to be thy disciple, but hath an unsavoury and unedifying life, is the most contemptible of all mankind, and nothing can make such a person supportable either to God or man.

Verse 14 to 17. "Ye are the light of the  
"world," &c.

Dost thou not here teach us, O Lord, that though we are to abhor being like the Pharisees, who did their works to be seen of men; yet we are not to be ashamed of being thy disciples, nor of employing any talents thou hast given us in thy service. Lord, keep us from a foolish affectation of singularity: let us never seek to differ from the world in matters of no consequence: but neither let us seek to keep ourselves undiscovered among them by sinful compliance, or sinful omissions. Lord Jesus, grant that our light may so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Verse

Verse 17 to 21. "Think not that I am come  
"to destroy the law and the prophets," &c.

Let us not think that thou camest to destroy the law or the prophets. As to the ceremonial law, thou wast subject to it, and didst also fulfil its numerous types. Thou didst accomplish the predictions of the prophets, and didst perfectly fulfil the moral law by thy obedience and sufferings. Thou also givest thy holy Spirit to write this law on the hearts of thy followers. Let us not then break one of the least of its commandments, or teach men so; but may we be careful to do and teach them all. And let us not be satisfied with the righteousness of the Pharisees, though it was highly esteemed by many; but may we have right views of the universal extent, and of the spirituality and strictness of thy law: and may we incessantly seek after conformity to it in all points, and be sensible of our guilt in every instance of the want of such conformity in thought or inclination, as well as in word or deed. Glory to thee, O Lord our righteousness, that thou hast provided a righteousness for us exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees, by fully answering every demand of the pure and perfect law of God. In this righteousness we will boast all the day long. Blessed be thy name, that thou hast also promised to write thy law upon our hearts: O accomplish this daily more and more, that without spiritual pride we may see that our righteousness, in this respect also, does really exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Verse 21 to 27. "Thou shalt not kill," &c.

These words of thine are very different from the practice of multitudes, who call themselves

thy disciples ; but let not this perplex or discourage us in the observation of them. Lord, keep us from being angry without a cause. Lord, keep us from speaking contemptuous or reviling words : and if at any time we fall into this sin, may we be restless till we have humbled ourselves before thee, and asked forgiveness of the person whom we have injured. Let us not dare to approach thee in prayer, much less at thy holy table, till we first be reconciled to our brother. O righteous God ! thou art of necessity the adversary of all the transgressors of thy holy, just, and good law. May every impenitent sinner know his danger, and make haste to be reconciled to thee, through the blood of thy Son. Heavenly Father, let us not deceive ourselves : we desire to agree with thee while we are in the way with thee, upon thy own terms, with our whole heart. We thankfully embrace that blessed method of reconciliation through the blood of the cross, and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. We renounce and forsake utterly, by thy grace, whatever is displeasing to thee. Blessed be thy name for thy amazing condescension in beseeching such mean sinful creatures to be reconciled to thee, the infinite God. Blessed be thy holy name, that Christ, in whom thou art well-pleased, is our peace. He hath gone to prison for us, and discharged our debt ; and thou hast released him, and received him up into heaven, and set him at thy right hand ; and he is to be our Judge, who is our Saviour.

Verse 27 to 33. "Thou shalt not commit  
"adultery," &c.

Lord, keep us not only from every word and  
act, but from every thought that is impure.

May we remember, that our bodies are members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit; and that if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy.

Verse 34 to 37. "Swear not at all," &c.

Preserve us from rash words, and from all kind of cursing and swearing. When we are called upon to make oath, may we go about it with the greatest reverence, as a most solemn act of thy worship. May we be modest in our assertions; may we be cautious and deliberate in resolving, but firm in executing those resolutions which are agreeable to thy will. May we be slow in promising, but faithful and strict in performing; and may we daily fulfil our vows to thee, O Lord.

Verse 38 to 43. "An eye for an eye," &c.

Let us not insist on retaliation. When we meet with an affront or injury, may we bear it with meekness, and look to thee, who, when thou wast reviled, reviledst not again, and when thou sufferedst, didst not threaten; that we may know what thou wouldst have us to do. We will not be afraid of exposing ourselves to farther insult, while we have thee to take our part. Keep us from being litigious: may we rather give up our right, so far as is consistent with thy will. Who-soever shall compel us to go a mile, may we go with him twain. May we give to him that asketh us, and not turn away from him that would borrow of us. May we be ready to distribute to the necessities of others, knowing that thou canst and will repay it, and that we shall never be losers



in obeying thy commands. Lord, make thy will clear to us, and we need not be afraid of doing it. Thou canst preserve thy sheep in the midst of wolves; and when our ways please thee, thou wilt make our bitterest enemies to be at peace with us. Lord, let us not be overcome of evil; but may we overcome evil with good!

Verse 44 to 48. "Love your enemies," &c.

How does the glory of thy heavenly goodness shine in these precepts, which are just a transcript of thy own example! Lord Jesus, thou didst love thy enemies; thou didst bless them that cursed thee; thou didst good to them that hated thee, and prayedst for them that despitefully used thee and persecuted thee: yea, thou didst lay down thy life for them, and become a curse, that they might be blessed for evermore. O Divine Love! who would not be ambitious to imitate it! Heavenly Teacher! give us indeed to love our enemies: they are our brethren, partakers of the same nature: they are liable to blindness, and prejudice, and passion, and are, alas! all diseased with sin: they are, for aught we know, those for whom thou prayest, and whom thou pitiest, and whom thou wilt yet bring to the knowledge of thyself, and to bitter remorse for what they are now doing. Give us then to love them: we may yet dwell together in heaven. And when any shall curse or wish evil to us, may we indeed bless them before thee. And if any act as if they hated us, may we seek an opportunity to do them good. And if any shall despitefully use us, may we carefully remember earnestly to pray for their welfare, especially their eternal salvation. Lord, how excellent and amiable is such a temper of mind!

mind ! It is agreeable to the example of our heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to arise on the evil and on the good. Wicked men will shew respect to their friends and companions, and will love those that love them ; but thy disciples must seek to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect. O Heavenly Father, what glory hast thou called us to ! Dost thou allow, and even command us to imitate thy high example, and to aspire to be children of God, and to seek to be perfect in goodness as thou art ? O help us by thy divine Spirit. Abba Father ! Deliver us from all malice, envy, wrath, sinful anger, and form our souls into thy love.

## C H A P. VI.

Verse 1 to 5. " Do not your alms to be seen  
" of men," &c.

O Searcher of hearts, who knowest all things, keep us from doing alms, or any good works, to be seen of men. Thou allowest us to seek thy approbation, and this is enough. What a poor reward is the praise of men ! Give us that honour which is from thee ; and let us not forfeit this by seeking any other. Thou seest in secret, and hast graciously promised to reward openly. Make us sincere and diligent in doing good, as under thine eye, and as secret as possible ; doing it before thee, and not before men.

Verse 6 to 14. " When thou prayest, enter in-  
" to thy closet," &c.

We thank thee, O heavenly Father, that thou hast allowed us to pray to thee in secret. It is

the highest honour, and the greatest pleasure, and the best employment of the faculties thou hast given us, to pour out our hearts before thee in secret. We would not want this comfort for the whole world. Keep us from using vain repetitions, or a needless multitude of words ; for thou knowest what we need before we ask thee. May every prayer of ours be the language of a dutiful and loving child to a parent, who is both able and willing to help all his children. May our chief desire in prayer be, that thou mayest be known, and feared, and loved ; that the gospel of thy Son may conquer all hearts ; and that thy Holy Spirit may make all men to know, and obey, and submit to thy will in all things, as the angels do in heaven. As for the good things of this life, may we be satisfied with a moderate portion of them, chiefly desiring thy blessing with what thou givest us ; for thy blessing maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow. And when we beg of thee the forgiveness of our sins for the sake of our Redeemer, may we feel ourselves by thy grace heartily disposed to forgive all who have done us any wrong. And may we be solicitous to be kept from the power of sin and Satan ; and that thou wouldst graciously either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted. And in all our prayers may we take our encouragement from thee only, and confide in thy power, mercy, and faithfulness ; and let our petitions ever be attended with adoration and praise to thy excellent name, which is worthy of all power, and dominion, and glory, for ever and ever.

Verse 14, 15. "If you forgive others, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

May we expect no forgiveness from thee, if we are not willing to forgive others: and when we find our hearts by thy grace sincerely inclined to forgive others all trespasses, may it encourage us to hope for pardon from thee, through the blessed mediation of him who teacheth us this comfortable truth.

Verse 16 to 19. "When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites." &c.

From this, and the two former instances of prayer and alms-giving, it plainly appears to be thy will that we should carefully avoid all ostentation. Lord, give us therefore to pray and fast to our Father in secret. May our hearts be right with God, full of pious and charitable dispositions; and may our external behaviour be a natural but modest expression of these. O keep us from the abominable hypocrisy of affecting in our demeanor what is not in our hearts.

Verse 19 to 21. "Lay not up treasure upon earth." &c.

What will treasures on earth avail these immortal souls, which are soon to be in eternity! Lord, give us a treasure in thy kingdom above. Thou art our treasure: in thee we have treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in thee we have a treasure of righteousness to justify us; treasures of grace to sanctify us; and treasures of glory inexhaustible laid up in heaven. Let our heart be where our treasure is; let this earth disappear, and let our thoughts and affections be set upon the



the things which are above, where thou sittest at the right hand of God.

Verse 22, 23. "If thine eye be single, thy  
"whole body shall be full of light." &c.

Lord, give us light; give us to see things as they are, and let our aim be right. If we imagine we see a glory in any of the things of this world, and make it our aim to attain them, how great and dreadful is the delusion! But if we follow thee fully, and make it our endeavour to please thee, we shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. O give us a single eye, a single heart.

Verse 24 to 34. "No man can serve two  
"masters." &c.

Let us not foolishly think that we can serve God and any worldly idol at the same time. Thou art the only true God, and thee only must we serve. All that we are, that we have, or that we are capable of, is thine: though it were infinitely more, it is all due to thee; and what can the world give us to flatter us away from thy service? It can give no more but what we eat or drink, or wherewith we are clothed; and need we fear the want of any of these from thee? Thou who givest us life, canst thou not easily give us food? Thou who givest us a body, canst thou not give us raiment? O heavenly Father, we see thee feeding the birds of the air, and surely thou wilt not suffer us to want food, when employed in thy service. Thou clothest the grass and flowers of the field; surely thou wilt not suffer us to go unclothed. As thou hast provided a  
costly

costly spiritual garment for our souls, thou wilt not think much to clothe our bodies. Let us not therefore, O Father, be anxious about these things, as the poor blinded heathens are, who know not thee. Thou knowest that we have need of these things; this ought to satisfy us: all our anxiety cannot add one cubit to our stature; it only increases the evils of this life, which are so great already. We thank thee for making that to be our duty which is our greatest comfort and interest: to be anxiously careful about nothing in this world, but to cast all our cares on thee. Help us to seek thy kingdom, that it may be established and may flourish in our hearts, and in the hearts of as many others as possible; and thy righteousness, that we may be justified and sanctified by it. In seeking these great and necessary blessings, may we have earnest desires and a lively faith in thy promises, and we shall not be disappointed: and the things of this life, so far as they are needful, thou wilt add.

## C H A P. VII.

Verse 1 to 7. "Judge not." &c.

Most wise and gracious Saviour! give us rightly to understand this prohibition. Surely it does not mean that we should not reckon those men unholy whose lives are impious and impure, and before whom thou commandest us, in the next words, not to expose holy things, lest they should trample them under their feet. What then does it imply? It certainly implies, in the first place, that we should not be forward, or rash, or uncharitable in forming our opinions of men. And  
next,

next, that we should put the most candid and favourable construction upon their actions and words, that they will bear. Above all, that we should beware of judging what their lot will be through eternity, as the greatest sinners may become eminent saints by thy omnipotent grace. Lord Jesus! help us faithfully to observe these things, and if more is implied, thou canst teach us. Give us also rightly to understand what thou sayest of pulling the mote out of our brother's eye. It cannot be meant that we should not reprove (with meekness) the sins of others; for thou hast said in thy law, "thou shalt not hate thy brother" "in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy" "neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." But thou wouldst have us to beware of being more concerned about a smaller fault of our brother than a greater of our own, and to begin at home, first giving diligence that the beam may be cast out of our own eye, and then we shall see clearly to cast out the mote out of our brother's eye. Lord, grant we may conscientiously observe this.

Verse 7 to 11. "Ask, and ye shall receive."  
&c.

Praise and thanks to thee for these encouraging words. Thou hast assured us that our prayers shall be heard when we ask, and seek, and knock, according to the will of God. Thou hast thrice asserted this comfortable truth and confirmed it farther from the example of an earthly parent, who, however churlish and ill-natured, will not mock his child crying to him for bread; and lastly has said, "If ye then being evil know how" "to give good gifts to your children, how much" "more shall your Father which is in heaven give" "good

"good things to them that ask him?" O joyful, transporting revelation of the heart of God towards sinful men! In confidence of this truth delivered by him who came from thy bosom and fully knows thy mind, we humbly beg, O heavenly Father, that thou wouldst give us thy holy Spirit to interest us in the Saviour. This is the bread of life, without which thou knowest our souls must perish. We trust thou wilt not, thou canst not deny it us. Amen.

Ver. 12. "What ye would men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Lord, give us so to do to men as we would they should do to us, and to love them as ourselves. And let our whole conduct towards them be full of that compassion, and mercy, and condescension, which we humbly hope for from thee, O Father, through the merits of Christ.

Verse 13 to 14. "Enter ye in at the strait gate," &c.

O shew us the path of life. Let us not think we are safe in following a multitude. Deliver us from the broad way of a thoughtless mind, a carnal heart, and a loose irregular life. O save us from walking in the ways of the covetous, or the ambitious, or the sensual, or the profane, or any of the unregenerate. May we press to get through the strait gate of true conversion, and walk in the narrow way of truth and holiness, after thee our Redeemer. We bless thee, that though this is a narrow way, it is full of pleasantness and peace, and leads to eternal life.

Verse



Verse 15 to 22. "Beware of false prophets,"  
&c.

Let us not believe every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God, by that plain and infallible test which thou hast given us, "their fruits;" by these we shall know them. Here we are taught this important truth, that true religion does not lie in professions of regard for thee, but in doing the will of our Father. But alas! we are naturally ignorant of the will of thy Father. Lord, teach us, for thou knowest it; and teach us to do it, for even when to will is present with us, how to perform that which is good, we find not. When the Jews asked thee, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? thou answeredst them, "This is the work of God, to believe on him whom he hath sent." Here then we have the first step, "to believe in thee." Lord, we believe; help our unbelief. We find also it is said in thy word, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." And this perfectly agrees with the former, for the heart is purified by faith. Grant, therefore, that by faith in thee we may be sanctified wholly in soul, body, and spirit, and may present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. And may the Holy Ghost make us not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God; and study every day, every hour to perform it. Lord, what wilt thou have us to do? Shew us thy way; teach us thy paths, for thou art the God of our salvation: on thee do we wait all the day.

Verse

Verse 23. "Depart from me, ye that work  
" iniquity."

Let us not deceive ourselves by imagining we can be thy disciples, if we be workers of any iniquity; for thou hast declared that thou wilt say to such, "I never knew you, depart from me." Lord, we renounce, by thy grace, all known iniquity; and if there be any iniquity in us which we know not, merciful Saviour, discover it, and deliver us from it, that it may not be our ruin. We trust in thee that thou wilt do this, and that thou wilt not send us away as those whom thou never knewest.

Verse 24 to 29. "Whosoever heareth these  
" sayings of mine, and doth them," &c.

Lord, keep us from building our house upon the sand; hearing these sayings of thine, and not doing them. Lord, give us to do them. Give us grace to understand the true meaning, and to make the right improvement of them all. When we compare our hearts and lives with the explications thou hast here given of the law of God, how great is our guilt! But, blessed be thy name, thou hast perfectly fulfilled the law in all its extent, and in thee is our justifying righteousness. Lord, give us also conformity to thy image. With hearts purified by faith in thee, constrained by thy love, and animated by the hope of the gospel, may we seriously pursue a constant course of new obedience to the divine law. Accomplish thy promise in thy covenant of writing it on our hearts. May we be humbled for every failure, and daily implore forgiveness from thy Father in thy name: and may we unweariedly press after a

fuller and stricter observation of all these sayings of thine.

## C H A P. VIII.

Verse 1 to 4. "A leper came and worshipped  
"him," &c.

After teaching, the next thing we find thee employed in, is healing diseases. The first instance here mentioned is that of leprosy, for curing which a long process was prescribed under the law; but thou healedst it by a touch of thy hand. We adore thy divine power; we adore thy condescension to the poor leper; and we are affected to see here a picture of thy healing diseased souls. Lord, the leprosy of sin has quite overspread our souls. We come with the leper, worshipping thee, and saying, "Lord! if thou wilt, thou canst make us clean:" we are sure thou canst do it. O be pleased to say, "I will, be you clean," and immediately we shall be "cleansed." Our sinful vileness, which made us all loathsome, shall be taken away. Lord, heal us, and we shall be healed; and instead of the gift offered under the law of Moses, accept our healed souls to be thy servants for ever.

Verse 5 to 13. "The centurion."

We see thee next curing the palsy! another disease very hard to be removed by ordinary means, but thou healest it by a word; thus shewing thyself to be that God whose words are works. How ready wast thou to help the miserable! "I will come and heal him." Thou didst not excuse thyself because wearied with other occupations,

pations, nor grudge the trouble of going where the diseased person was. The faith of the centurion, however, prevented this trouble. "Lord, " I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and " my servant shall be healed." O give us this sense of our unworthiness, and this faith with which thou wast so well pleased. Lord, our souls are grievously diseased with a palsy, by which we are quite disabled, and are without all spiritual strength. Art not thou, O compassionate Saviour! willing to come and heal us? But we are not worthy that thou shouldst come under our roof. We are wretched, vile, hell-deserving sinners; but speak the word only, and our souls shall be healed. Lord, give us faith in thee, and be pleased to say, as thou didst to the centurion, " Go your way, and as you have believed, so be " it done unto you."

Verse 14 to 15. " Peter's mother-in-law."

The next instance is, Peter's mother-in-law, who lay sick of a fever. Thou touchedst her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose and ministered unto them. How suddenly was her health and strength restored! O rebuke the fever of tumultuous passions, of raging lusts of the flesh and of the mind, under which our souls naturally lie, and cause us to arise and minister to thee. What a happy life to serve thee, instead of lying sick of such a fever! If thou hast already healed us, we would bless and praise thy name for it. Lord, suffer us not to relapse into this dreadful disease.



Verse 16. " When the even was come, they  
" brought unto him many that were pos-  
" sessed."

After all the labours of the day, thy hand was not shortned, nor thine ear heavy, but in the evening thou continuedst to heal all that were sick, and those that were possessed with devils. It appears from thy word that the devil, when permitted, can inflict grievous diseases on the human body, such as these possessions seem to have been; and that he has a far more dreadful power over the souls of the wicked, whom he possesses with brutish and devilish lusts. O Son of God, who camest to destroy the works of the devil, we beseech thee suffer him not to exercise this last power over us any longer; whatever bodily pains or diseases he may be permitted to inflict upon us; whatever trouble of mind we may endure by his fiery temptations, save us from being under that power which he exercises over the children of disobedience. We trust also thou wilt not let us be tempted by him in any respect above what we are able to bear.

Verse 17. " Himself took our infirmities."  
&c.

Praise to thee, O Saviour, for taking upon thy self the guilt and punishment of our sins, which are the procuring causes of all these numerous infirmities and sicknesses we are liable to. What a compassionate physician would he be, who was willing to heal his patients by taking the disease off them upon himself: this would not do among men; but this is the way thou hast taken, O  
Divine

Divine Healer! whose pity and love are as admirable as thy power.

Verse 19, 20. "Master, I will follow thee  
"whithersoever thou goest." &c.

If he proposed to better his worldly circumstances by following thee, thy answer gave him to understand he would be disappointed; but if his resolution proceeded upon better motives, we learn from these words that thou wouldst have thy disciples to found their most commendable zeal upon deliberate and serious consideration. This man, before he determined to follow thee every where, ought to have considered what inconveniencies and hardships this would expose him to; fatigue; long want of food sometimes; sometimes worse lodging than that of the foxes or birds; besides being hated, and persecuted, and looked upon with horror by his former friends: yet, in the view of all these discouragements, he might, by thy grace, have thus reasoned with himself, "I shall still be with him who is Lord of  
"all, whose power can provide the means of life  
"for me, or support me under the want of them;  
"who will be my day in the darkest night; and  
"my refuge in the most terrible storms; in  
"whose company I need for nothing, because he  
"is the Almighty God; and he is my Saviour,  
"the friend of my soul: therefore I will in his  
"strength chearfully partake of all hardships  
"with him, and reckon myself happier to follow  
"him through the wide world, than to dwell in  
"a palace or a paradise." Lord Jesus, our hearts are deceitful; but we think, if thou wast now upon earth, we should be exceeding happy to follow thee every where. No lodging, no fare

would be disagreeable with thee. Nothing would affright us or make us uneasy in thy blessed company. But thou art now in heaven, and we remember how thou hast said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Lord, give us to follow thee now by faith wheresoever thou callest us, for thy divine presence is with us still. Whatever inconvenience or trouble we suffer in the way of serving thee, may we suffer them pleasantly and chearfully, as we think we should have done by thy grace, had we enjoyed thy bodily presence. And may we follow thy blessed steps; may we walk as thou also walkedst, knowing that, after following thee upon earth, we shall assuredly arrive where thou art, and see thy face in glory.

Verse 21 to 23. "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." &c.

Lord, give us the instructions from this passage which it was intended to convey. We know not whether this man wanted to be excused from following thee till after the death of his father, or only till he should go and bury his father already dead. But whatever were the circumstances, they were fully known to thee, and thou wast the best judge of his duty. We bless thee that in ordinary cases, love to thee, which is the first of all duties, does not interfere with any marks of regard or affection to relatives, but teaches us to abound in them; and that in no case it interferes with loving them most tenderly: yea, it requires us, if we should be called to part with them for thy sake, to love them as much as ever, and to do them all the good in our power. Save us, on the one hand, from imitating the Pharisees, whom  
thou

thou severely reprov'dst for making unbidden services in religion a pretence for want of duty to relations; and, on the other hand, save us from hesitating a moment, when we are clearly called by thy word to forsake father and mother, wife and children, and our own lives also for thy sake.

Verse 24 to 28. "There arose a great tempest in the sea." &c.

Here, Lord Jesus, we behold thee in a storm at sea, but all thy company as safe and secure, as thy falling asleep among them intimated. They, however, being weak in faith, did not think so, but in a fright awoke thee, saying, "Lord, save us, we perish!" a prayer very fit for awakened sinners under apprehension of perishing for ever. In this view we would earnestly cry to thee, "Awake, Lord, for our help; carest thou not that our souls perish? Lord, save us." And we trust thou who wouldst not let their lives be lost will not suffer our immortal souls to be cast away. But their fear of perishing in the tempest, while they had thee with them, was groundless. They might easily have known they were perfectly safe under thy protection, though thou wast asleep; therefore thou saidst to them, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Lord, let not us be among the fearful and unbelieving; do thou dwell in our hearts by faith; and then, whatever danger threatens us in following thee, let us not be afraid. Thou canst keep our minds in perfect peace amidst the most dreadful storms. Thou rebukedst the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. Thus thou didst shew thy power over the boistrous elements. Oh! when our minds are troubled, do thou speak peace in them; when



storms of perplexing thoughts or unruly passions arise, do thou command a calm, and let not our faith fail when all the waves of affliction roll over us, for thou canst save us. Give us to be strong in the faith of thy power and grace.

Verse 28 to 34. "There met him two possessed with devils coming out of the tombs." &c.

It seems they abode among the tombs, as melancholy places which suited their disease, or the inclination of the unclean spirits that possessed them; yet this ought not to hinder us from looking on the tombs of thy saints as very agreeable and pleasant, especially when we remember that thou thyself didst lie in a tomb. The spirits of darkness have no power over the dust which is united to thee. These demoniacs were exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way; but they stood in awe of thee, and dared not abide thy coming. They were obliged to confess thy power over them, and their fear of future judgment from thy hand: "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God; art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Dreadful words! both of hatred and despair. Lord, give us the directly opposite temper, to rejoice in thy nearness to us now, and to look for thy second coming with a chearful hope. We see farther in this passage the malice of the evil spirits, in seeking to prejudice the inhabitants of that country against thee, by asking leave to enter into their swine. Thou didst permit them; and here thy grace was glorified, in pity shewn to the two poor men; thy power was displayed over the infernal spirits, who durst not do this without thy

thy permission; their inclination and ability to do hurt was also shewn; and lastly, the wicked Gadarenes were deservedly punished for their covetousness and inhumanity. Unaffected with the merciful recovery of the two men, they were concerned only for the loss of their swine, and besought thee to depart out of their coasts. Unhappy men! their impiety punished itself; for nothing can be a greater misery than thy departure from any. Lord, keep us from a worldly inhuman spirit, and never, never depart from us.

C H A P. IX.

Verse 2 to 9. "Jesus seeing their faith, said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." &c.

What wouldst thou have us, blessed Lord, to learn from this passage? In the first place, it is clear that the faith of the persons who brought the man to be cured was acceptable to thee. Give us, Lord, the same kind of faith with respect to thy ability and willingness to heal our souls. In the next place, thou exhortedst him to be of good cheer; not because he was to be cured of his bodily disease, but because his sins were forgiven him. Give us to be more desirous of pardoned sin than of any earthly blessing, or of life itself. Lord, we believe thy power to forgive sins. We want no more to set our consciences at perfect ease, but to know that our sins are forgiven by thee: then shall our souls chearfully arise to go where thou pleasest.

Verse 9 to 13. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." &c.

Blessed be thy name, for allowing publicans and sinners to sit down with thee. The Pharisees thought they would be defiled by the approach of such persons; but thou graciously receivedst them, And how comfortable is it to hear from thy mouth on this occasion, "that the whole have no need of a physician, but the sick." The greater our need is, we have the more encouragement from this merciful declaration to implore thy pity. Thou also appealest to that scripture, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Thus thou shewest that it is the will of thy Father, and thy will, that poor sinful creatures, instead of being despised, should be kindly invited to use the means of salvation, and called to repentance; and that this was one end of thy coming. Lord, we confess we have been very great sinners. O heal our sadly-distempered souls, and give us that thorough repentance to which thou callest us, and save us from the greatest of all condemnations, "abusing thy grace."

Verse 14 to 17. "Thy disciples fast not." &c.

Here we learn that religious fasting ought to proceed from religious sorrow, and was unreasonable at a time when thy disciples enjoyed thy comfortable presence; but would be very proper afterwards, when thou wast taken from them. And thy words concerning the impropriety of putting a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, and of putting new wine into old bottles, seem to point to thy prudent and tender management of thy disciples.

disciples. Agreeable to what is said in the prophet concerning thee, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom; he shall gently lead them that are with young." For the same reason thou saidst afterwards, "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now." Praise to thee who considerest what thy poor disciples can bear, and proportionest their labours and burdens to the strength thou givest them. We rejoice to be under the care of such a Shepherd. The Lord is our shepherd; we shall not want. He maketh us to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth us beside the still waters; he restoreth our souls; he leadeth us in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil, for thou art with us; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort us. Thou preparest a table before us in the presence of our enemies; thou anointest our head with oil; our cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Verse 18 to 32. "The ruler's daughter—  
 "the woman diseased with an issue of blood  
 "—and the two blind men."

The first of these was raised to life agreeably to the faith, which her father had in thy power when he said, "Lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." The next was made whole according to her faith, for thou saidst to her, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole." The blind men were restored to sight  
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in the same way : to them thou saidst, " Believe " ye that I am able to do this? According to " your faith, be it unto you." From all these instances we see, that a faith in thy healing power was required in those that were to get their bodies healed. Lord, give us that faith which is necessary to the healing of our souls. Glory to thy free grace ; we believe and are sure that thou art " able " to heal us. We are also sure that thou hast no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Since then thou art both able and willing, and hast given us to believe both, what should hinder our being healed? Thou knowest our earnest desire to be healed ; we wait for thy salvation. If there be any thing else implied in that faith which is necessary to the healing of our souls, O Lord Jesus, graciously work it in us, and increase our faith.

Verse 33, 34. " When the devil was cast " out, the dumb spake." &c.

This is the case when souls are delivered from the power of Satan. They who had not a tongue to speak, or a heart to think of thy praise, can now speak and think of nothing else. Their hearts indite good matter, and their tongues are the pen of a ready writer, to utter abundantly the memory of thy great goodness, and to sing all the day long of thy mercy.

Verse 35. " Jesus went about, preaching " and healing every sickness." &c.

This is the second time the sacred historian takes notice of the divine tenor of thy life, which

was a continual doing good to the souls and bodies of men. How comfortable is it to read again and again, that thou healedst every sickness and every disease! There is no disease in our souls which thou art not able to heal. Lord, heal us then, to the eternal praise of thy mercy and power.

Verse 36 to 38. "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them." &c.

Oh infinite God! we adore thy unsearchable mercy, thus clothing itself with flesh, and appearing in the form of human compassion! Thy divine attributes are far above our thoughts; but we know what it is to be moved with compassion. Thou, O Son of God, wast moved with real compassion; thy bowels were moved at the sight of the poor people fainting, and scattered abroad like sheep having no shepherd. Lord, save us from a hard and unfeeling heart. Give us a heart full of pity and tenderness; and let these natural affections be sanctified as they were in thee, and directed to their proper objects. Give us to be concerned for the outward and temporal distresses of our brethren, but much more for the misery and danger of their immortal souls. Lord, save perishing souls; thou, who art the Lord of the harvest, send forth labourers into thy harvest: unless they are sent, and constrained by thee to this work, what success can they hope for? Oh send them forth through the whole earth, and accompany their ministrations with thy saving power, that thy harvest may be fully reaped.

## CHAP. X.

Lord, shew those, whom thou sendest forth into thy harvest, how far the directions given to thy apostles are given to them also. Save them from presuming to go out of the sphere thou hast assigned them: at the same time, vouchsafe them light and grace to imitate thy apostles in every thing in which they are called by thee to imitate them.

Verse 5. "These twelve Jesus sent forth."

Oh let none run to this work unsent; let them not undertake it from unworthy motives, but with a mind enlightened in the knowledge of the gospel, and a heart inclined to spend and be spent in it by thy blessed Spirit.

Verse 6 to 15. "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Thy apostles were sent first to the Jews, whom they were to consider as poor wandering lost sheep, and to them they were to preach the kingdom of heaven. Lord, give to all, who preach thy gospel, to look upon their hearers as by nature lost souls; and to declare to them, in thy name, the absolute necessity of being born again, that they may enter into the kingdom of God. And may they give the most free and universal invitations to lost sinners to accept of that free grace which they themselves have received. Thou commandedst thy apostles not to provide gold nor silver, because the workman is worthy of his meat. May all thy ministers be at the utmost distance from

from covetousness and wordly-mindedness; and do thou dispose these, to whom they are sent, to give the supplies which are proper and decent for those who are set apart for this work. May they shew the greatest regard for the worthy; may they preach thy truths with great love to the souls of their hearers, addressing them in the most gentle and winning manner, in order to gain them to Christ; and at the same time, if they reject the gospel, warning them of their dreadful danger; and testifying that they are pure from their blood.

Verse 16 to 21. "Behold, I send you forth."  
&c.

Those whom thou sendest forth to preach thy kingdom, have still great numbers of carnal and wicked men to deal with, enemies to the power of godliness. Grant, therefore, that they may be prudent to avoid evil from such persons, and careful not to give them the least foundation for just complaint. May they beware of needlessly bringing any degree of persecution on themselves; but if they should be persecuted and brought before governors and judges for thy sake, Heavenly Father, direct them how to speak by thy blessed Spirit. May he rest upon them when they are reproached for the name of Christ. And grant, O God, the assistance of the same blessed Spirit to all who preach thy word, both in their private meditations and their public discourses. In both, may they look to Him, and be under his influence; and when they speak to immortal souls in thy name, may the Spirit of their heavenly Father speak in them.

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Verse 21 to 25. "And the brother shall de-  
"liver," &c.

Blessed Lord, how virulent was the hatred of the world to thy first disciples! overpowering the strongest ties of nature; and how universal was it! But this was their comfort, that they were treated in no other manner than their Master and Lord was, and it was for thy name's sake: and they were assured that, enduring to the end, they should be saved. Lord, make us thy genuine disciples, who endure to the end, and then we need not fear the hatred of all mankind, nor their keenest reproaches. Then we shall bear the cross after him who is able to support and comfort us, come what will, and shall be eternally saved.

Verse 26 to 34. "Fear them not there-  
"fore."

Deliver all that preach thy word from that fear of man which causeth a snare, and against which thou hast here warned thy apostles thrice. Let those, O Lord, be afraid whose principles or practices cannot bear the light, because there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be known. But let not thy servant be afraid to profess thy truths, which love to be brought into the clearest light. May a concern to avoid the displeasure of the Almighty extinguish in them all sinful fear of weak and mortal men; and give them to confide in the care and protection of their heavenly Father, whose providence extends to the meanest creatures, and directs the minutest circumstances in their lot. Let them never be ashamed of any of thy truths or ways, but confess thee with that frankness and

cheerfulness which the transporting thought of being confessed by thee, before thy Father in heaven, should inspire: and let every other fear that would tempt them to deny thee in any instance be quite overpowered by the fear of being denied by thee before thy Father in heaven.

Verse 34 to 40. "Think not that I come to  
"send peace on earth."

O Prince of Peace, surely the divisions and wars that have been occasioned by thy gospel were not owing to it, but to that wickedness in the human heart which it was sent to cure. And that enmity in the unconverted against their nearest relatives, when they became Christians, looks like the venom of that malicious and murdering spirit, the great opposer of thy religion. They who love thee, have love, and compassion, and kindness in their hearts to all men; and if it be possible, as much as lieth in them, they will live peaceably with all men. But it is very consistent with this, that they will rather part with all that is near and dear to them, than part with thee; and will by thy grace take up their cross and follow after thee, and cheerfully lose their lives for thy sake. Thou art the infinite God, to whom all is due; and the ties they are under to thee, are inexpressibly the strongest of all other. Help us, Lord, to act agreeably to this incontestible truth, through the whole of life.

Verse 40 to 42. "He that receiveth you, re-  
"ceiveth me."

When we hear thy gospel preached by men of like passions with ourselves, may we receive it as  
from

from thee: and may we beware of despising the messenger, as we would not despise his Lord who sent him. And grant that we may not only give due honour to those who are eminent in gifts and graces, but may cordially love and esteem the weakest of thy real disciples, and be ready to do them good, as we have opportunity; knowing that a cup of cold water given to one of them, in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose its reward.

## C H A P. XI.

Verse 2 to 7. "Now when John had heard," &c.

Thus thou shewedst that the Messiah, promised in the Old Testament Scriptures, was now indeed come: "Then, says the prophet, the eyes of the  
 "blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf  
 "shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man  
 "leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb  
 "sing." And in the book of Psalms it is said,  
 "He shall judge the poor of the people; he shall  
 "save the children of the needy. He shall deli-  
 "ver the needy when he crieth, the poor also,  
 "and him that hath no helper. He shall spare  
 "the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of  
 "the needy. He shall redeem their souls from  
 "deceit and violence, and precious shall their  
 "blood be in his sight." We rejoice, O Sa-  
 viour, that these words were so clearly fulfilled in  
 the time of thy personal ministry. O may they  
 be fulfilled more and more by the enlargement of  
 thy kingdom. May many blind minds receive  
 sight; many lame be made to walk in the ways of  
 God; many lepers be cleansed from sin; many  
 deaf

deaf, hear thy voice; many who are dead in trespasses, be quickened and made to live to God; and multitudes of the poor and despised, whose souls are precious in thy sight, be made to hear and embrace the glad tidings of salvation. O true Messiah, let thy kingdom thus come every where; and pity those who are offended at the external meanness of it. Open their eyes to see that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men; that it is the greatest wisdom to submit to the wisdom of God, and the truest glory to renounce their own glory, and to glory in the Lord. Thou hast said, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." Lord, give us this blessedness; let us never be offended in thee in any wise; let us rejoice and triumph in thee perpetually, for we have good reason so to do.

Verse 7 to 15. "Jesus began to say concerning John, What went ye out to see?"

What reason have we to be thankful that thou hast appointed our lot under the gospel dispensation, which is so far superior in light, life, and comfort, to any of the former, and which proclaims repentance and salvation to all men, and to the chief of sinners? Lord, save us from neglecting this great salvation: may we, with a holy violence, press forward into thy kingdom; and, by faith, take hold of these blessings which thou hast freely offered to all.

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Verse 16 to 19. "Whereunto shall I liken  
"this generation?" &c.

Lord, let us not be among those who, instead of receiving the gospel with love, are perpetually finding fault with something or other in them who preach it. When they cavilled against thee, in whom there was no sin, no wonder they make exceptions against thy servants who are weak, fallible, and imperfectly sanctified. Lord, deliver us from all prejudices against thy gospel.

Verse 20 to 24. "Then began he to upbraid  
the cities," &c.

As thou hast so clearly declared, that it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for some men than for others, especially for those who have enjoyed peculiar advantages for conversion, but have stood out against them; Lord, save us from this great condemnation: and may these peculiar advantages make us both thankful and careful.

Verse 25 to 30. "At that time Jesus answered,  
"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of  
"heaven and earth," &c.

O how sweet are these words! Let not our Lord be offended, if we echo them back in prayer and praise. Blessed be thy name, O Saviour, Son of God, and Lord of all, that thou takest pleasure in the revelation of thy truths to the simple and the weak, while they are rejected by those who are proud of their understanding, and wise in their own conceit. This is a proceeding worthy of thy supreme wisdom: we rejoice that all things are delivered to thee of thy Father. Worthy art thou

thou to receive all power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

None but thy Father knows thy infinite merit, and thy divine perfections, which are the same with his. And thou alone knowest the Father; nor can any man know him, except by thy revelation of him. Here we would put up that petition of thy servant Philip, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." But we remember what thou answeredst him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Lord Jesus, thou hast indeed of a long time given us some knowledge of thyself, though we have walked most unworthy of it; but we bless thee that ever we knew thee, and that in thee we see thy Father, who we humbly hope is, through thee, our Father also. Lord, let us not deceive ourselves: if we have hitherto been deceiving ourselves, yet we are encouraged, by thy reviving words which follow, yet to come to thee. Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God; in thee alone is our salvation. Thou seest that some of us labour, and are heavy laden indeed. We groan under the overwhelming burden of sin and sorrow; we can no where find rest. O give us thy rest, rest in thyself. Put thy yoke upon us, O Lord, for we know it is easy, and there is no peace but in being under it. Thy commandments are not grievous; thy ways are ways of pleasantness, and all thy paths are peace. Thou puttest upon us no other burden, but to hold fast that which we have till thou comest. O how gladly do we hear thee say, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Teach us,

Lord; speak, for thy servants hear. When we hear thy words, we would eat them and feed upon them all the day long. Thou art meek and lowly in heart; thou canst bear with us, though we be very slow and backward; thou canst stoop to us, though we be mean. O make us meek and lowly like thee, our divine Master. This will also contribute to the rest of our souls, when we are delivered from pride and impatience. The world will not then be able to disturb that sweet rest which we enjoy in thee.

## C H A P. XII.

Verse 1 to 12. "At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day," &c.

Here we learn from thee, who art greater than the temple, and Lord of the sabbath, that it is lawful to do works of mercy on that day. This is the second time thou hast appealed to these words, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Lord, give us a merciful temper, and make us at all times to abound in works of mercy.

Verse 13. "Then saith he to the man, Stretch out thine hand."

Thou calledst him to stretch out his withered hand, and at the same time gavest him power to stretch it out. Lord, when thou callest us to believe, to repent, to perform any duty, may we thus obey thy call.

Verse 14 to 21. "Then the Pharisees held a  
"council against him." &c.

The Pharisees sought to destroy thee; but thou, instead of inflicting any other judgment, didst withdraw from them. They could not, however, hinder thee from doing good; for when great multitudes followed thee, thou healedst them all, charging them not to make thee known; for thou didst not seek the praise of men. This truly great and amiable behaviour fulfilled the words of thy Father by the prophet, "Behold my servant whom I have chosen," &c. Lord, we rejoice that thou art thy Father's chosen servant in the work of man's redemption. Thou alone wast equal to the task. We adore thee as his beloved, in whom his soul was well pleased, and to whom he gave his spirit without measure. Thou art meek and peaceable; thou art full of compassion; and therefore the poor outcast Gentiles put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. Lord, we are of these: in thy name we put all our trust: we have no other hope but thee.

Verse 22 to 29. "The blasphemy of the  
"Pharisees."

Lord, save us from every thing that approaches to this dreadful sin, or looks like it. Let us never impute to the influence of the evil spirit those things which are opposite to his kingdom. Some serious persons, thou knowest, are distressed with fears of having committed this unpardonable sin; but we hope none who abhor the thoughts of it, who are grieved for every sin they have committed against the ever-blessed Spirit, and who adore and depend upon him in all their ways, are really guilty of



it. If any are now guilty of it, is it not more probable, Lord, that they will be hardened in wickedness and averse to religion, than that they will mourn and lament their wretchedness in prayer to thee? Oh! compassionate Saviour, we trust thy blood will save us from every sin we have committed. Oh! divine Spirit, infinite and eternal God, hast thou not dealt very graciously with us in a way of conviction and restraint, and sometimes of some comfort? If thou hadst utterly forsaken us, surely thou wouldst not have dealt with us in this manner. We trust, therefore, that amidst all our great sins, we have been mercifully kept back from sinning this sin: in this hope we will, by thy grace, seek thee and serve thee while we live. Oh! destroy out of us whatever is opposite to thy glory.

Verse 33 to 37. "Against evil and idle  
" words."

Lord, make our hearts good, that our words may be good. Let our speech be the sincere expression of an honest, good, humble, meek, compassionate, holy, loving heart. Alas! why have we been so careless about our words in time past? Oh! forgive us, and grant that we may henceforth take good heed what we speak. Many seem to have little regard to this; but we would well remember what thou, the Judge of the world, hast here declared, that for every idle word that men speak they shall give account at the day of judgment; and that by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned. And that assertion of thy inspired servant, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth  
" his

"his own heart, this man's religion is vain." Lord, deliver us from every vain thought, and every evil inclination; and when at any time such arise in our hearts, save us from adding the guilt of expressing them in words: and give us to lay that stress upon ordering our speech aright, which thy holy word lays upon it.

Verse 38 to 45. "Master, we would see a  
"sign from thee."

Lord, shew us what we are to learn from these words. They seem to have been spoken by thee against that evil and adulterous generation, who had departed from the true God, and would not receive thee, his Son, doing the works of thy Father amongst them, but still insisted upon a sign from heaven. Thou wouldst give them no sign but that of thy resurrection. Lord, give us to look upon that as the greatest of all signs. Hereby thou wast declared to be the Son of God, which thou didst profess thyself to be at thy death. If the men of Nineveh, and the queen of Sheba, shall rise in judgment with that generation who did not repent at thy preaching; Lord, grant that they may not condemn us, who enjoy such advantages under the dispensation of thy Spirit. And oh! save us from resembling that generation in that dreadful circumstance of having their last state worse than their first. Thou hast mercifully delivered some of us, glory to thy blessed name, from an unclean spirit of impiety. O let not our souls remain as an empty house; let thy blessed Spirit take possession of them, and fill them with his gracious dispositions, that it may not be in the power of any wicked spirit to enter into them again.

Verse 46 to 50. "He that doth the will of  
" my Father, is my brother, and sister, and  
" mother."

Surely the most dutiful and affectionate of the human race never loved their relations as thou lovedst thine. These words therefore imply no want of regard to thy mother and thy brethren, but that those who do the will of thy Father in heaven, are so dear to thee, that thou lookest on each of them as thy mother, and sister, and brother. What a privilege is it to be the object of such affection from thee, Oh Son of God! Dost thou indeed consider every one, who doth the will of thy Father, as thy nearest relation? Oh give us to know and to do his will. And as it is revealed in his blessed word, grant that our hearts may be cast into this mould, and our whole temper and whole conduct may be formed upon it; and may it be the continual breathing of our souls, "Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?"

### C H A P. XIII.

Verse 10 to 17. "Why speakest thou to them  
" in parables?"

Lord, suffer us not, with the wicked and obstinate Jews, to hear thy parables and not to attend to them, or not to understand them. Deliver us from all prejudices against the truth, and make us sincere and diligent inquirers into it, with dependance upon thy grace. Give us ears to hear, and hearts to understand. How happy were thy first disciples, who had access to see thee work the works of thy Father, and to hear the truth from thy mouth, and to propose their doubts

doubts to thee! Many prophets and righteous men desired to see and hear the things which thy disciples saw and heard, but could not. Blessed be thy name, though we have not seen thee in the flesh; thou canst now open our understandings to understand the scripture. Do it, Lord, by thy blessed Spirit, and make thy words food and medicine to our souls; may we derive from them that light, that conviction, direction, comfort, edification, which they were intended to convey.

Verse 1 to 9. and verse 18 to 23. "The parable of the sower."

Lord, let us not resemble the way-side hearers, who understand not thy word, and from whom the wicked one catcheth it away. Give us tender and contrite hearts, that thy word may make impression upon them; and let us not only receive it with joy at the first, like the stony ground, but may it take deep root so as not to be scorched by tribulation or persecution. Lord, deliver us from the thorny cares of this world, and from the deceitfulness of riches, which promise a great deal of happiness and give little or none. Oh let not thy word, sown in our hearts, be choaked by any of these; but give us hearts made good and honest by thy grace, that we may understand thy word, and bear abundant fruit to thy glory.

Verse 20 to 30. and verse 36 to 43. "The parable of the tares."

In the explication of this parable thou hast plainly said, that the children of the wicked one (who is a liar, and a murderer, and unclean, quite opposite



opposite to thy light, and love, and holiness) shall at the end of the world be all gathered out of thy kingdom, in which they are now mixed with the righteous, and shall be cast into a furnace of fire, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Thou hast used the very same words in explaining the parable of the net: "They shall be cast into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Such, therefore, will certainly be the dreadful end of all those scandalous persons, who by their principles or example lead others to sin, and of all workers of iniquity. Lord, save us from being in the number. They shall be cast into a furnace of fire! Surely wicked men do not believe this, when they run on in sin. Lord Jesus, give us a continual and lively impression of it, which all that we see in this life may not be able to weaken. Give us also a lively view of the blessedness of the righteous, who shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. What glory in such a kingdom! what safety and happiness with such a Father!

Verse 31 to 33. "The parable of the mustard-seed and the leaven."

Here we learn that thy kingdom of grace is of a growing and spreading nature; and, from small beginnings, rises to a great height. Oh may the gracious principle grow in our hearts; may our faith and love grow exceedingly, so as to give undoubted evidence of their reality; and may the example of thy saints be blessed to those among whom they live: may thy grace flow from heart to heart, till a little one become a thousand.

Verse

Verse 44 to 47. "The parable of the hidden  
"treasure, and of the pearl."

Lord, thou art that hidden treasure and that rich pearl, which enricheth our souls and makes them happy. We long sought happiness elsewhere in vain. Glory to thee for convincing us of the vanity of the world, and of our own misery by sin, and our own emptiness, and discovering thyself to us. Thou art our chief good: most gladly do we give up all for thee: Lord, help us to do it sincerely and fully.

Verse 47 to 50. "The parable of the net."

This is the third parable after that of the sower and of the tares, which refers to a mixture of good and bad in thy church. Lord, what will it profit us to be Christians in name, if we be not so in reality? We beseech thee, make our hearts good by thy Spirit. When the trial is made at last, may we be found among those who shall not be rejected: O grant this for thy name's sake.

Verse 51, 52. "Have ye understood all these  
"things?"

May the ministers of thy word be helped to imitate thee in their manner of teaching; winning the attention of their hearers to the truth, by setting it in an agreeable variety of lights, and bringing forth things new and old. May we understand it and love it in all views; and do thou make it to produce its blessed fruits in our hearts and lives.

Verse

Verse 53 to 58. "Is not this the carpenter's  
"son?"

Lord, how unhappy were those of thy own country and thy own house, who were offended at the meanness of thy external appearance? Their sin brought its own punishment along with it; their unbelief prevented thy doing many mighty works among them. Almighty Saviour, let it not be so with us: we believe thou art the ever-blessed God, though in the form of a servant; and that thou canst, if thou wilt, perform the greatest and mightiest works in our souls. Lord, help our unbelief; we are persuaded thou canst make these dark, unholy, and melancholy souls of ours, to be full of light, and purity, and joy. O do it then, Lord, to the glory of thy power and grace.

#### C H A P. XIV.

Verse 1 to 12. "John beheaded by Herod."

Here we learn the blessedness of thy faithful servants in life and death. The baptist was of a more excellent spirit than to be overawed by kings from doing his duty: he boldly told Herod, it was not lawful to have his brother's wife. What though he incurred the hatred of that incestuous woman, all she was permitted to do was to get him beheaded in prison; by which his sufferings were shortened, and his heaven increased and hastened by a glorious crown of martyrdom. Here also we see a shocking picture of the wicked, who are under the tyranny of their lusts, and who entangle themselves in rash promises and oaths.

Herod

Herod sinned in making this oath, and sinned in keeping it. Herodias, to gratify her revenge and lust, murdered a saint of God, and made her own child a partner in these crimes. Lord, how happy are thy people, and how miserable are the wicked, though in the highest stations! Thy disciples came and told thee. Give us, after their example, to tell thee all things. When we meet with what shocks or perplexes us, or excites grief or fear, may we go and tell thee. Blessed Hearer of Prayer, thou hast not only allowed, but commanded us, in every thing to make our supplications to thee; to pour out all our hearts before thee. Such complaints, sincerely made to thee, are never in vain.

Verse 14. "Jesus was moved with compassion,  
"and healed their sick."

How comfortable is it, and how lovely a sight, to behold thy compassions flowing out at the appearance of a multitude of poor, sinful, diseased creatures! Thy bowels were moved for them; this pity of thine is our refuge in all our distresses. Thou healedst their sick. Lord, heal our souls, which thou seest are objects of thy compassion; the more unworthy, the more needful.

Verse 15 to 22. "The miracle of five thousand  
"fed by a few loaves and fishes."

Thy compassion extended further than healing them; thou exercisedst thy divine power to provide food for them, in that desert place. "They need not depart." O good and merciful Saviour, feed our souls with the bread of life. Though these people had died for want of food,  
it



it was but the death of the body ; but our souls must perish, unless they be fed with the spiritual bread of thy flesh and blood. Lord, give it to us, who are ready to perish with hunger.

Verse 22 to 34. " Jesus walked on the sea."

When thou hadst sent the people away, thou retiredst a while from human converse to speak with thy Father. It was on a mountain, and the night came on, whilst thou wast exposed to the inclemency of the air, on a lonely mountain. Thou enjoyedst such rest and refreshment in thy soul, that thou didst not need a house or a bed-chamber : the cold ground was thy floor, and the heavens thy roof. Lord, we adore thy humiliation. Keep us from luxury and effeminacy ; may we thankfully accept mean fare and lodging when we remember thee. About three in the morning thou appearedst to thy distressed disciples, walking on the sea : they were alarmed and frightened ; but thou mildly spakest to them, bidding them, " Be of good courage ; it is I ; be not afraid." Lord, we would remember these words when we come to die. Though our pain may be great, and our thoughts confused by the weakness of our bodies ; yet thou our Master callest to us, and sayest to us, " Be of good cheer ; it is I." We may therefore, with Peter, venture out of the ship, and walk on the water to go to thee. It is probable, that when we look into the ocean of eternity, we shall be afraid ; but when we begin to sink, we will cry to thee, " Lord, save us." And, we trust, thou wilt stretch out thy merciful hand, and take hold of us. Thou blamedst Peter for want of faith : Lord, give us faith, and more faith, that we may glorify thee in life and death.

Verse

Verse 32 to 36. "The wind ceased.—They  
 " worshipped Christ.—The people of Gen-  
 " nefaret flocked to him to be healed."

As soon as thou camest into the ship, the wind ceased! What or whom need we fear, if we are embarked with thee? Lord, we worship thee. Of a truth thou art the Son of God. And, with the people of Gennefaret, we beseech thee that we and ours may only touch the hem of thy garment. Speak but the word, and our souls shall be healed.

## C H A P. XV.

Verse 1 to 20. "Of the things which defile  
 " a man."

Lord, be pleased to shew us the truths and rules of conduct contained in this passage. Are we not here taught, that it is a wicked thing to make any of the commandments of God of none effect by human traditions; that they who teach the commandments of men, instead of those of God, worship him in vain; that every plant, which thy heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up; that a man is not properly defiled by what entereth into his mouth, but by what proceedeth out of his heart; that the human heart is full of filthiness, till it be made clean by thy holy Spirit; that our first care should be about our hearts, to have them purified by thy grace from every thing that defiles; that not only adulteries, fornications, lasciviousness, and all thoughts and inclinations towards them are of this sort, but also all revengeful or malicious thoughts, all thoughts of injustice, deceit, pride, foolishness, envy?

envy? Lord, give us to remember these useful lessons, and to profit by them; and mercifully deliver from every thing that defiles in thy sight. Oh create clean hearts in us.

Verse 21 to 28. "The woman of Canaan."

Blessed be thy name for this encouraging example. Oh give us like faith, that we may cry to thee for mercy to our souls, grievously vexed by sin and Satan: that though thou shouldst not answer us a word, we may still cry after thee. And though it should seem that we have excluded ourselves by our great sins, or by our long and obstinate refusal of grace formerly, yet we may fall down before thee and implore thy help; yea, though thou shouldst seem to treat us with the abhorrence which we deserve, may we still insist, if it were but for the crumbs thrown to the dogs under their Master's table. Lord, give us that faith which will make us resolved, if we perish, to perish at thy feet, and to trust in thee, though thou shouldst slay us. Lord Jesus, we would now exercise it by thy grace. Do with us what seemeth good in thy sight; we cannot go away from thee.

Verse 29 to 39. "Jesus heals the lame, blind, dumb, &c. and feeds four thousand with seven loaves and a few small fishes."

Here we have a fresh instance of thy compassion to the poor Jewish multitude in healing their sick, and in miraculously feeding them, lest, if they had been sent away fasting, they should have fainted in the way. Oh merciful Saviour, thou hast the same bowels now, and the same power; and

and thou knowest the soul is far more valuable than the body. Stretch out thy hand then, exalted Redeemer, and heal those souls that are lame, blind, dumb, maimed. Behold, we lie prostrate at thy feet, waiting to be healed. Lord, thou seest they are ready to faint and to die for want of the bread of life; feed them with thy flesh and blood. This is the true manna to support us in this wilderness: evermore give us of this bread.

## C H A P. XVI.

Verse 1 to 12. "The Pharisees and Saducees seek a sign.—The disciples are warned against their doctrine."

Lord, keep us from being like those obstinate Jews of old, or modern infidels, who will not see the signs of the Messiah's coming and kingdom fulfilled in thee. We bless thee that the evidence is so strong; but what can avail to convince the wicked hypocrite? What can move the obdurate to relent? Lord, save us from the leaven of the Pharisees, who were fond of honourable places and titles; who would neither go into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffer them that were entering to go in; who devoured widows houses, and for a pretence made long prayers; who, after great pains to make proselytes, made them more wicked than themselves; who made vain and foolish distinctions concerning the obligation of oaths; who were scrupulous about smaller things, but omitted the weightier things of the law; who were more curious about the outside than that which is within; who honoured the dead saints, but persecuted the living. Lord,  
F
save



save us from these things ; and save us also from the heaven of the Saducees, who said that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit. Give us a firm and lively faith of the invisible world, and let our whole conduct be influenced by it.

Verse 13 to 20. “ Peter’s confession.”

Lord Jesus, give us to know that thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God, in the way in which thy blessed servant knew it ; to whom it was revealed, not by flesh and blood, but by thy heavenly Father. We believe, Lord ; help our unbelief : and we bless thee that the gates of hell shall not prevail against thy church to the end of the world.

Verse 21 to 28. “ Our Lord foretels his sufferings.”

Thou couldst clearly foretel thy sufferings and death, and was greatly offended and displeased with Peter, who, soon after that glorious confession, would have dissuaded thee from suffering. Thou treatedst him as thine adversary, or as one employed by Satan to hinder thee from prosecuting thy great work of saving sinners, by offering thyself a sacrifice for them, according to the will of thy Father. This shewed how much thy heart was set upon it ; and thou tookest this occasion to inform thy disciples that they also must suffer, and that if any man will come after thee he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow thee. Lord, give us to deny ourselves ; give us to take up our cross daily, and to follow thee, through good report and bad report. Cause us to pass the few remaining days of our pilgrimage  
under

under a lively sense of the truth of these words of thine, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" And may we be animated in a steady and determinate pursuit of the salvation of our souls, by a firm belief of that heavenly and gracious reward, which thy followers shall receive when thou shalt come to judge the world in the glory of thy Father, with the holy angels. Thou wilt, O Lord, at the proper season; thy other predictions are accomplished. Some of thy disciples did not taste of death, till they saw thee coming in thy gospel kingdom; the dreadful calamities, foretold by thee, came upon that unhappy nation who obstinately rejected thee; thy gospel hath been spread through the world; it remains that thou shouldst appear in thy glory, to judge all nations, and to receive thy servants into heaven. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

## C H A P. XVII.

Verse 1 to 14. "The transfiguration."

Here, blessed Lord, we see a very wonderful and pleasing sight: whilst thou wast praying, the fashion of thy countenance was altered, and thy raiment became white and glistering. And Moses and Elias came in glory to talk with thee about thy death. Peter thought it was good for him to be there; but how much better will it be to behold thy glory in heaven where thou now art! In the mean time, cause us to hear thy voice and to obey it. Thy heavenly Father said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Lord, speak, for thy servants

hear. Teach us what thou wouldst have us to do. We bless thee for thy written word. Open our understandings, that we may perceive thy mind in it, and incline our hearts to make it the rule of our whole conduct.

The disciples were frightened; but thou, according to thy wonted compassion, encouragedst them, "Arise, and be not afraid." Give us to fear no evil while thou art with us. It is not thy will, that thy disciples should be cast down with too much fear.

Verse 14 to 22. "The lunatic child."

The poor man spoke to thee with much diffidence, when he said, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." Lord, give us to understand the full meaning of thy answer, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." We most readily join with the man in crying out, with tears, "Lord, we believe; help our unbelief." We believe thou canst heal our souls; we believe thou canst just now sanctify them, and make us thy true disciples: Lord, do it. Thou saidst, "This kind cometh not out but by fasting and prayer." Give us conscientiously to use these means, to get rid of prevailing lusts. We ask not the faith of miracles; but we earnestly beg, O merciful Saviour, that thou wouldst give us the faith necessary to salvation.

Verse 22, 23. "Our Lord foretels his sufferings a second time."

Though Peter rebuked thee for speaking of the necessity of thy sufferings, that did not hinder thy re-

resolving to undergo them; thou here again declaredst thy resolution. Glory to thy constant heavenly love, which all the unkindness and cruelty of men could not overcome. O Redeemer, give us constancy and resolution to do and suffer thy will to the last.

Verse 24 to 27. "The tribute money."

It does not appear that this tribute was really due by thee. And as thou wast the Son of God, and Lord of all, had they known thee, they ought not to have demanded it: nevertheless, to prevent all occasion of complaint or stumbling, thou didst work a miracle to furnish it. Give us to imitate thy condescension, and thy care to prevent all ground of offence. May we owe no man any thing, but to love one another.

## C H A P. XVIII.

Verse 1 to 5. "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Lord, convert us and make us as little children. Our natural pride refuses this; but we beseech thee, for thy mercy's sake, destroy it. Give us unaffected humility; give us simplicity; give us freedom from anxious cares, to rest upon the goodness, power, and wisdom of our heavenly Father, whom thou hast revealed to us. Lord, save us from guile, ambition, covetousness, remembering injuries, and whatever else is opposite to that child-like temper. And make us those little ones who believe in thee.



Verſes 5, 6. and from verſe 10 to 15. "The  
" regard and love due to Chriſt's children."

Lord, give us to receive them in thy name, and for thy ſake to love and eſteem them. And O keep us from caſting a ſtumbling-block before them, or diſcouraging them. May we take heed that we deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones, whom thy Father in heaven ſo greatly loves, that he hath ſent thee into the world to prevent the leaſt of them from periſhing; and their angels do always behold his face; and whom thou ſo loveſt, that thou leftſt heaven to ſeek and ſave them, and rejoiceſt more over one of them that had gone aſtray and is now found, than over ninety and nine which went not aſtray. Lord, give us earneſtly to ſeek their ſalvation, in the uſe of the means which thou haſt appointed.

Verſe 7 to 10. " Againſt offences."

Lord, keep us from ſtumbling at offences that may come in our way; and keep us, we beſeech thee, from laying them in the way of others. O ſave us from this woe; and give us grace to part with a right hand, or a right foot, or a right eye, rather than be drawn by them into ſin and into everlaſting fire. Lord Jeſus Chriſt, help us.

Verſe 13 to 18. " How to deal with a brother  
" who has treſpaſſed againſt us."

Give us to obſerve this rule which thou, Lord, haſt preſcribed. May we firſt tell him his fault privately; but if he will not hear us, may we take with us one or two more; and if he ſhould neglect to hear them, may we tell it to the church;  
and

and only in the melancholy event of his neglecting to hear the church, may we consider him as a heathen man and a publican.

Verse 19, 20. "A promise to joint prayer."

Glory to thee for these encouraging words. Lord, incline the hearts of thy disciples to meet for prayer, and to agree touching what they shall ask; and may we firmly believe that when we are gathered together in thy name, there thou art in the midst of us.

Verse 21 to 35. "Of forgiving injuries."

Oh what blessed words are these! which thou spakest in answer to Peter inquiring how oft he should forgive his brother, "I say not unto thee "until seven times, but until seventy times seven." Adorable Saviour, we have sinned against thee much oftener; but these words encourage us to hope that yet thou wilt forgive us. Thou who hast given repentance, wilt also give remission of sins. And the parable thou added concerning the king that was wroth with his servant, who would not forgive one of his fellow-servants, is a confirmation of it. O heavenly King, thou seest that we heartily forgive any who have or seem to have trespassed against us. We humbly hope this disposition which thou hast taught us to seek, and hast given us in some measure, is a sign that thou wilt forgive us those millions which we owe thee.

## C H A P. XIX.

Verse 3 to 13. "Of marriage and divorce."

Lord, grant that all who profess thy name, if they are unmarried, may consider seriously what is given them, and may live chaste in body and mind; and if they are married, may have that indissoluble affection to each other, which thy kind and merciful command requires: and may they live together as heirs of the grace of life, that their prayers may not be hindered.

Verse 13 to 16. "Children brought to Christ."

We adore thy divine compassion, which appears in so various instances. Though thy disciples were saints, thou art kinder and more compassionate than they. They rebuked those who brought their little children, perhaps as troublesome, or unseasonable, or doing what they judged of little importance. But thou saidst, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Lord Jesus, we desire to bring our children to thee. O be pleased graciously to receive them into the arms of thy mercy, and bless them every one. The natural affection which thou hast implanted in parents is far inferior to thy divine love.

Verse 16 to 30. "The young man who went away sorrowful," &c.

This young man came running and kneeled to thee, and asked thee with great respect, what he should do that he might inherit eternal life. He

had been from his youth free from gross sins ; yet, when he heard that he was to sell his great possessions, and give them to the poor, and take up his cross and follow thee, he went away sorrowful. Alas ! what a temptation is great wealth ! Thou hast expressly said, that it is vastly difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Lord, pity them that are rich, and give them poverty of spirit, and by thy divine power break the power of the temptations they lie under ; and keep the poor from the sins they are most liable to ; and make those to whom thou hast given neither riches nor straitning poverty, thankful for their desirable condition. Give all who would be thy disciples to forsake all that they have, be it more or less, and to follow thee. Thou art worthy to be followed for thy own sake ; infinitely worthy : but thou hast graciously promised a great reward besides ; a hundred-fold in this life, and eternal life hereafter. Thou hast promised thrones of judgment to thy apostles. Thou hast also promised to every one that overcometh, that he shall sit with thee on thy throne. Lord, let the present joy of following thee, and the hope of such high blessedness after death, animate us with new vigour every day, that we may think of nothing but following thee, and serving thee with all that we are, all that we have, all that we are capable of.

## C H A P. XX.

Verse 1 to 17. " The parable of the labourers  
" in the vineyard."

All who serve thee shall receive a glorious reward, even eternal life. And this shall be the  
portion



portion of the Gentiles, who were so late, as well as of the Jews, who were so early called to thy service ; and of the oldest as well as the youngest converts. Lord, we are heartily sorry, such of us as have not served thee from our youth, that we did not go early in the morning to work in thy vineyard. We are ashamed, and grieved, and vexed, we lost so much time, and stood idle so long. We would now by thy grace redeem the time, and double our diligence. Thy work is most pleasant to them whose heart is wholly set upon it : O may it be our meat, as it was thine.

Verse 17 to 20. " Our Lord again foretels his  
" sufferings."

That painful, ignominious, and accursed death, with all the circumstances of it, was well known to thee long before. How great was thy zeal for thy Father, and for the salvation of souls, that supported thee in the expectation of it. Thou didst often revolve it in thy mind, and still continuedst firm in thy resolution to suffer. Let all thy redeemed bless thee for thy unshaken constancy and unexampled love. Worthy art thou of all that glory, and honour, and power, to which thy Father hath exalted thee in heaven. Lord, give us often to look forward to death, and to realize it in our thoughts ; and to rejoice by a lively faith in thee, that our souls shall go where thou art, and our bodies shall be raised from the grave, in due time.

Verse 20 to 28. " The ambition of the mother of Zebedee's children."

From thy words on this occasion, most wise Lord, we learn, that they who seek to reign with thee,

thee, must first suffer with thee, which many seem not to consider. We learn also, that thou givest the honours of thy kingdom, according to the will of thy Father, to those for whom he hath prepared them, and not from such motives as prevail with the kings of the earth. And, lastly, that thy disciples ought not to seek to exercise dominion or authority over their fellow-disciples, as the princes of the Gentiles do; but to be ambitious in a quite opposite way; to strive who shall do most good to their brethren, and serve them best: to seek to minister to others, rather than to be ministered to by them, after thy example, O adorable Redeemer, who camest not to be served, (though all creatures are by right thy servants,) but to serve the meanest of mankind by doing them good, and suffering for them. Lord, give us to lay this seriously to heart, and to mind it in our practice, however opposite it is to the temper and way of the world, and even of too many who profess thy gospel.

Verse 29 to 34. "The two blind men by the way-side."

Gracious Saviour, we see it is good to be importunate in prayer. The multitude rebuked these blind men for so crying out; but they would not be silenced, nor discouraged. They cried the more, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David." Their prayers were heard: thou stoodst still, and calledst them. Oh with what joy would they be led to thee, and hear thee say, "What will ye that I should do unto you?" They say unto thee, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened:" and thou hadst compassion on them, and touchedst their eyes,

eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed thee. Encouraged by this example, we would cry incessantly to thee, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David;" and would not give over while we have a tongue to speak, or are capable to form a desire, until thou art pleased to hear us. All our request, O Lord, thou compassionate Saviour, is, that thou wouldst open the eyes of our minds, and turn us from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that we may thus follow thee, and be with thee for ever.

## C H A P. XXI.

Verse 1 to 12. "Jesus rides in humble triumph into Jerusalem."

This action of thine, Lord, was foretold many years before in the prophetic writings. How different thy character and appearance from that of the kings and conquerors of this world! Many of them were proud destroyers; but thou art meek, and bringest salvation. When we see thee riding on an ass, with the mean trappings of thy disciples clothes, we are struck with astonishment at thy humiliation. At the same time, this sight makes all the triumphant processions of ancient conquerors appear childish and contemptible. Oh meek and merciful King of Zion, we adore thee in thy lowly state! We most gladly join with the multitudes in crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: hosanna in the highest!" Save now, we beseech thee, O Lord. O Lord, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.

Verse

Verse 12 to 15. "He casts out buyers and  
"sellers out of the temple."

Thou wast perfect in meekness and humility, yet thy zeal flamed against the profanation of thy Father's house. Those who turned the house of prayer into a house of merchandize and a den of thieves, thou didst with a holy violence drive out of the temple; but thou sufferedst the blind and lame to come there to be healed. Oh that thou wouldst still drive out all hirelings and all thieves out of thy church; and oh that thou wouldst purge the temple of our hearts. Lord, let it not be a house of merchandize: let it not be a den of thieves: but let it be a house to thy Father, and to Thee, and to the Holy Spirit.

Verse 15 to 17. "The priests displeased at the  
"children."

They were sore displeased when they heard the children praising thee. May we, on the contrary, rejoice to see young ones attempting this heavenly work, and encourage them all we can. And may we be these babes, (weak and unexperienced as we are) out of whose mouths thy praise is perfected: it is better to be these, than to be the highest and greatest upon earth.

Verse 17 to 23. "Of the barren fig-tree, and  
"faith in prayer."

Lord, we have too long been barren: oh let us be so no more. For thy name's sake make us fruitful. Thou art sparing us year after year. Oh merciful Son of God, make us now at last, by influences from thee, to bring forth fruit unto God. Thou hast said, "All things whatsoever  
"ye



“ ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” Lord, give us faith: we have only this to ask for us and ours, (and we are sure the petition is agreeable to thy will,) that thou wouldst make us partakers of thy salvation. Heavenly Father! hear for thy dear Son’s sake, who spake these words, and give us thy holy Spirit. We trust thou wilt do it. Lord, help our unbelief.

Verse 23 to 28. “ By what authority dost thou these things ? ”

Here is one instance among many, of thy silencing thine adversaries, and putting them to shame. The solution of the question they proposed to thee, depended upon the solution of a previous question concerning the authority of John the Baptist. But they were so obstinate in rejecting thy divine mission; they would not acknowledge that of John, which inferred thine; and at the same time they were afraid to deny that of John before the people. Miserable state of mind! Opposition to the Son of God, and a slavish fear of man! Lord, keep us both from the one and the other.

Verse 28 to 42. “ The parable of the two sons, “ and of the husbandmen who killed the heir.”

Lord, let us not be satisfied with the most laudable professions, if our practice be not answerable. Surely it is good when thou sayest, “ Go work in my vineyard,” to answer, “ I go, Sir;” and it is most impious to refuse. But of the two it is far better, after refusing, to repent and do it, than to promise and not to perform. Alas! we too long refused to serve thee.  
Grant,

Grant, oh our Father in Christ, that we may now do it in sincerity, and with our whole heart and strength. Of all things preserve us from resting in an empty profession.

In the next parable we hear thee, Lord Jesus, telling the Jews, that as their fathers had killed the prophets, they would soon kill thee, the Son of God, whom thy Father had sent last of all, saying, "They will reverence my Son;" and that after casting thee out of the vineyard, and killing thee, they would be miserably destroyed by the Lord of the vineyard, who would let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, that would render him the fruits in their seasons. And this judgment, which they themselves could not deny to be equitable, was (we find by the history afterwards) actually executed upon them. Lord, grant that other nations may hear and fear. Lord, give us to take warning with respect to our own souls. Thou hast given us many calls, many invitations, many solemn warnings: Lord, keep us from continuing to reject them. May we now hear thy voice, and reverence thee the Son of God. Yes, Lord, we believe: help our unbelief.

We have long enjoyed a place in thy vineyard; let us no more be barren or unfruitful. Thou art the true vine; all our fruitfulness must come from thee. O unite us to thyself by thy Spirit, and cause us to abide in thee, that we may bring forth much fruit acceptable to thy Father.

Verse 42 to the end. "Jesus saith unto them,  
 "Did ye never read in the scriptures, the  
 "stone which the builders rejected," &c.

Thou art that stone, that tried stone, that precious corner-stone, laid in Zion by the Lord  
 God,

God, for a sure foundation to them that believe on thee. They shall never be confounded. Tho' thou wast rejected by the builders, thou art now become the head of the corner : and this is the doing of the Lord, and marvellous in our eyes. They who oppose thee, do but hurt and destroy themselves. Whosoever are offended in thee, and do not build upon thee, shall be broken : by stumbling at thee they shall fall and perish : but they who would strive with thee, and seek to pull thee down upon their own heads, how dreadful must be their perdition ! Save us, Lord, from every degree of opposition to thy truths, thy righteousness, thy kingdom. May we be brought by thy blessed Spirit to an entire subjection to them all.

## C H A P. XXII.

Verse 1 to 14. "The marriage of the king's  
"son."

Lord, teach us ! This parable thou spakest to the Jews, who were first invited to the feast of the gospel, but made light of it, and persecuted thy servants who were sent to them. Those murderers were destroyed, and their city made desolate ; and the servants were sent into the highways, to invite the nations of the world promiscuously. But when the king came to see the guests, he took particular notice of their having wedding garments, without which the feast was profaned : and one being found who had not on a wedding garment, that man was bound hand and foot, and taken away and cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Glory be to thee, that we are, at this day, all invited to the marriage-supper ; that the King of  
heaven

heaven has made a marriage for thee his Son with thy church; and that a feast of fat things, and of wines well refined, is prepared for all people upon thy holy mountain. And Wisdom crieth in the public places, "Come eat of my bread, " and drink of the wine which I have mingled. " Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the " waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, " buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk " without money and without price." Thou, O Lord, didst stand and cry, "If any man is " athirst, let him come unto me and drink." We most gladly come; for there is bread enough in our Father's house, and we perish with hunger. We come to thee who art pleased to invite us; our souls thirst for that living water. Lord, give us to drink of it; and oh let us not be like him who wanted the wedding garment. What is that wedding garment, Lord? We read in thy word of truth, that the great multitudes which no man can number, that shall stand before the throne and before the Lamb, shall be clothed with white robes, which they have washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Lord, give us a robe of this kind. We read also, that thy church shall be arrayed in fine linen, which is the righteousness of saints. Oh give us thy righteousness imputed to us, and the righteousness of thy Spirit implanted in us. Be thou the Lord our righteousness; made of God to us righteousness and sanctification; so we shall have no cause to fear our being rejected in the day of trial.

Verse 15 to 22. "Render to Cæsar the things  
" that are Cæsar's," &c.

Thy enemies acknowledged thy truth and impartiality: Lord, give us to be true and impartial.



tial. We would humbly inquire of thee the way of life ; not to tempt thee as they did, but that we may be saved. O teach us to render to all men, high and low, what is theirs, and to God what is God's : and give us a portion of thy divine wisdom, that we may always use sound speech, which cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us. Thou always overcamest evil with good. The malice and cunning of thy adversaries, when they took counsel how they might entangle thee in thy talk, served only to shew, that the scripture was fulfilled which faith of thee, " The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him ; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord."

Verse 23 to 33. " The argument of the Sadducees against the resurrection."

They argued with thee from the books of Moses, which they professed to believe. Thou answeredst them from the same authority, that Moses called the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. " Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living." One of thy inspired servants says of the patriarchs, " God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." By comparing these words with thine, we see, that " to be their God," implied they should be happy ; and thou hast assured us that they are so just now in the kingdom of God, where their souls dwell, and shall in due time have

have their bodies reunited to them in glory. Lord, give us to imitate the faith and patience of these holy men, that we may be gathered to them when we die; yea, Lord, that we may go to thee, who hast said, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God."

Verse 34 to 40. "The first and great commandment."

Praise to thee for taking occasion from this question, proposed with no good intention perhaps, to declare this great truth, that supreme love to the Lord our God is the first and great commandment; and that the second is like to it, "to love our neighbour as ourselves;" and that all the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments. The reason that is naturally in all men, approves of these words. Whatever diversity there is of human laws, and schemes of morality, they all agree in acknowledging, that love to God and love to mankind are the essentials of a right temper and right practice. Lord, we are persuaded we cannot be completely happy, until we love thee with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind. We cannot otherwise answer the end for which we were made, nor have full rest in our souls, nor be what we ought to be. Glory to thy name, O heavenly Father, for promising in the new covenant, which thou hast confirmed by the blood of Christ, to write thy laws in the heart. Oh write the first law in the first place upon our hearts; and make us also to love our neighbours as ourselves. And we beseech thee for Christ's sake, that thou wouldst by thy holy

Spirit give us the highest degree of this love attainable in this life, and soon bring us (when- ever thy work is done) to that degree of it which reigns in heaven.

Verse 41 to the end. "Christ is David's son, " and also his Lord."

They had asked several questions; but the questions of greatest importance to sinners are those that relate to the Messiah, the Saviour; how he may be known and believed in. This is the first step, "to believe in him whom God " hath sent." This is the foundation of all religion, and of all good life, to know thee, O Lord Jesus, the promised seed, and the Lord of all, We adore thee, as humbling thyself to be the Son of David. We desire to be entirely subjected to thy government; and we rejoice to know that thou must reign till thou hast brought all thine enemies under thy feet. Lord, convert and change them, and make them thy willing and loyal subjects.

#### C H A P. XXIII.

Verse 1 to 12. "The good doctrine, but bad " example of the Scribes and Pharisees."

When we see teachers of thy religion resembling the Pharisees, in not practising what they preach, let us not stumble at it: thy word is true, and thy precepts are just, let men do what they please. Lord, keep all thy servants in the work of the ministry from those things which thou hast condemned in the Pharisee. Let us not impose upon others what we are not willing to

to do ourselves. Let us not do any of our works to be seen of men. Keep us from ostentation, and from loving honour from men, and preferment to others, and salutations, and honourable titles. May we call no man our master, or teacher; for thou, O Lord, art our only Master, and our fellow-christians are our brethren, over whom we have not such authority, nor they over us. And may we call no man on earth our father; for one is our Father, who is in heaven. Nor let us receive these titles from others; but may we remember, that he who is greatest among thy disciples shall be the servant of the rest; even as thou camest not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give thy life a ransom for many: and that whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted. And oh grant that our humility may be unaffected and sincere. Thou knowest we have good reason to be humble all our days.

Verse 13 to 33. "The woes against the Pharisees."

Thou hast in these woes against the Pharisees, directed thy disciples, and particularly pastors and teachers, to a quite opposite conduct. Lord, give us therefore to remove, as much as we can, all obstacles and discouragements that may hinder men from entering into the kingdom of heaven; to excite and encourage them to enter, and to give them an example by going on before them: to do justly and kindly to all men, especially to the widow and fatherless, and weak and destitute; remembering that this is an essential part of that pure and undefiled religion before thee our God and Father in Jesus Christ, and the



God and Father of all who trust in thy name through him : and to abhor making prayer, or any religious duty, a cloak to unjust or unworthy practices of any kind. Lord, let us not for a pretence make long prayers : may we have our eyes fixed upon thee in that exercise, and then we hope our prayers shall never turn to our damnation. Lord, pity, and pardon, and convince of their folly and wickedness, those who are at a great deal of pains to make proselytes to a party, while they suffer them to be as much or more the children of hell than they were before. Give us to be concerned, that souls may be brought to Christ. Let us not be indifferent about any of thy truths or ordinances ; but may we still cleave to them all. At the same time, may we never be satisfied, that men should externally join with the purest church upon earth, unless their souls be united to Christ, and Christ formed in them. Lord, keep us from all profanation of thy name, attributes, ordinances, words, or works. May we remember, that to swear by any of these, is to swear in effect by thee, whose they are ; and keep from all foolish and unfair distinctions, as to the obligation of vows and promises. Let us not trifle with things of a sacred or of a moral nature. While we are careful to keep the least of thy commandments, may we be still more careful to keep the greatest. May we beware of omitting such duties as may be compared to the tything of herbs ; but may we have chiefly in view judgment, mercy, and faith. Lord, let us not strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. May we seek first to have the inside cleansed, that the outside may be clean also. Lord, make our hearts clean by thy holy Spirit : let not sinful or vain thoughts lodge within us. While our outward appearance is plain  
and

and unaffected, may our souls (instead of sepulchres full of all uncleanness, as they once were) be temples of God. Lord, let us not pretend to honour the dead saints, and persecute the living; but may we love them and do them good while they are on earth, and imitate their faith and practice when they have finished their course, and are gone to heaven. O how unhappy are those who fill up the measure of the sins of their forefathers, and bring on themselves, when their iniquities are full, the righteous judgments of God! Lord, let not this be the misery of this sinful land. Blessed be thy name, that thou hast made persecution for conscience-sake to cease from among us. O root out that contempt and hatred of serious religion which still abounds. Lord Jesus, how great is thy pity! how tender is thy care for perishing souls! Often wouldst thou have gathered the children of sinful Jerusalem, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but they would not. Often hast thou invited and called us to hide ourselves in the refuge of thy wounds, and alas! we have wickedly refused: but now we would fain come, and hope thou wilt not reject us; for thou hast said, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." We deserve to be rejected: it is a wonder of thy mercy and patience, that we are not given up to the lusts of our own hearts. Glory to thee for this desire of waiting still upon thee. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." If we perish, let us perish at thy feet; but we trust thou wilt save us, O merciful Son of God, who camest to seek and save that which was lost, and who hast given so many evident proofs of thy willingness, as well as ability, to save the chief of sinners.

## C H A P. XXIV.

Verse 1, 2. "The disciples shewed him the  
"buildings of the temple."

It seems the Jewish temple was a very beautiful, strong, and magnificent structure. Thy disciples admired, no doubt, the strength and greatness of it; but they were told by thee, that one stone should not be left upon another, because Jerusalem did not know the time of her visitation: and thy prediction hath been long ago fulfilled. Lord, convince the inhabitants of great and populous cities, that if, like the wretched Jews, they reject thee, and despise thy gospel, their great buildings and temples, and all that they boast of, may soon be brought to the dust.

Verse 3 to 28. "Our Lord's answer to the  
"enquiry of the disciples, What shall be  
"the sign of thy coming, and of the end  
"of the world?"

Here are many things applicable both to thy coming to judge Jerusalem, and thy coming to judge the whole human race. Let us not be surprized, that thy predictions should bear the character of their author, "with whom a thousand years are as one day," and should have various steps and degrees of accomplishment, till every thing be fulfilled. It is not for us, Lord, to know the times and the seasons; but may we be helped to make a right improvement of what thou hast been pleased to declare. Thou hast given warning against many deceivers, and false Christs, and false prophets, who would shew signs and wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they

they would deceive the very elect. History informs us, that many such arose before the destruction of Jerusalem, and that many have risen since ; and it is not improbable that many will yet arise. Lord, give us to take heed that no man deceive us. We thank thee for the word of truth, the infallible rule : O do not deny us the teachings of thy holy Spirit, that we may rightly understand it ; and give us to do thy will, as far as we do understand it, that we may know of every doctrine, whether it be of God.

Before the destruction of Jerusalem there were wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes ; and while it was besieged, and the abomination of desolation stood in the holy place, it was a time of unheard-of tribulation ; but the days were shortened for the sake of thy elect. Dreadful times may yet come before the end of the world. Lord, let not our hearts be troubled, come what will, for any thing that we may suffer ; for thou canst support us, and canst with every temptation make a way to escape. Thou hast forewarned thy disciples, that they must expect to be afflicted, and killed, and hated of all nations for thy name's sake : and that many shall be offended, and betray one another, and hate one another. Lord, if we shall be called to suffer the worst, strengthen us by thy holy Spirit, who can make the weak and timorous more than conquerors. Thou hast said, " Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many wax cold ; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." Let us not stumble when we see iniquity abounding, and when we see the love of many professing Christians far inferior to that of their predecessors ; but may we acknowledge and revere the accomplishment of thy predictions : and may we, O merciful Saviour,



Saviour, endure to the end, by thy Spirit dwelling in us, in spite of all temptations from bad examples and a body of death.

Thy gospel was preached to many nations before the ruin of Jerusalem; and, glory be to thee, we have reason to look for a greater spread of it than ever, before the final judgment. Lord, let thy kingdom come: let the kingdom of thy grace be advanced through all the earth, and the kingdom of thy glory hastened. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Verse 29 to 35. "The sign of the Son of  
"man in heaven."

Were not these words of thine fulfilled in that generation, when the kingdoms of this world were shaken, and the gospel of thy kingdom established? when thou wast declared to be the Son of God, by that power and glory with which thy kingdom shone in its infancy, and when thy messengers were sent out from Jerusalem to every part of the earth, to preach thy gospel, and bring in thy elect. But they will be fulfilled also at thy coming to judge the world, when thou thyself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. What an awful appearance will that be! how far superior to any event that was ever seen since the creation of the world! yet all who love thy name may rejoice in it.

Verse 36 to 44. "The uncertainty of the  
"time."

As no man or angel knoweth of that day or hour, as it will seize on a careless world, just as  
the

the flood of Noah did, or the storm of fire and brimstone upon the cities of the plain; Lord, help us to watch : let us never have thy coming out of our minds, as the carnal world have it. Thou comest as a thief in the night, unexpectedly. O may we be ready; for thou comest in such an hour as we think not. Probably thou wilt soon call us to come and appear before thee, which will be much the same as to our interests. O Lord Jesus, make us ready : let us not deceive ourselves. May we be on the right foundation, and may we be employed in thy work patiently and diligently. Lord, suffer us not to be mistaken as to our state. O hear us, merciful Saviour.

Verse 45. "Who then is a faithful and wise  
"servant."

Lord, make all thy servants in the gospel faithful and wise in the service and work thou hast assigned us. O give us to feed the souls we have the care of with the true bread of life. Give us, Lord, that we may give to them; and may we keep back nothing that is profitable for them, but give every one his portion, rightly dividing the word of truth. Lord, keep us from being like that evil servant, who says in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming;" and begins to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. May we keep at the utmost distance from this character, by thy grace.

## C H A P. XXV.

Verse 1 to 13. "The parable of the virgins."

The evident design of this parable is to shew the necessity of watchfulness. Lord, grant that we may not slumber and sleep, but may have our lamps always trimmed, and ready for thy approach. Above all, keep us from deceiving ourselves with an empty profession: give us the oil of true grace. Blest be thy name, we may obtain it now. O give it, Lord, and give more of it; and cause us to live in perpetual readiness for death, or for thy second coming, that we may go in with thee to the marriage, before the door be shut.

Verse 13 to 30. "The talents."

After repeated injunctions of watchfulness, the next thing is diligence and faithfulness in improving the talents thou hast given. Lord, give us to know and attend to these; and whatever abilities, means, opportunities thou givest us, grant we may faithfully improve them in thy service. Save us from unprofitableness.

Verse 31 to 46. "Christ judging the world."

Lord, give us the lively faith of what thou hast here revealed. We believe, that thou shalt come in thy glory, and all the holy angels with thee; and that thou shalt sit upon the throne of thy glory; and that all nations shall be gathered before thee, and a separation made of the righteous from the wicked. We believe, Lord, that thou shalt say to the one, "Come, ye blessed of  
" my

" my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for  
 " you from the foundation of the world ;" and  
 to the other, " Depart from me, ye cursed, into  
 " everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his  
 " angels ;" and that the wicked shall go away  
 into everlasting punishment, and the righteous  
 into life eternal. We believe also, that the kind  
 and merciful behaviour of the one, and the un-  
 kind and unmerciful behaviour of the other to  
 thy brethren, will be found, at that day, an evi-  
 dence of their regard or disregard to thee. O  
 Son of God, grant that seeing we know these  
 things, we may act agreeably to this knowledge.  
 Lord, prepare us, and cause us to abide in thee,  
 that when thou shalt appear, we may have confi-  
 dence, and not be ashamed before thee at thy  
 coming. May we know, that we have passed  
 from death to life, because we love the brethren ;  
 and may we know and believe the love that God  
 hath to us, and dwell in love : and herein may  
 our love be made perfect, that we may have  
 boldness in the day of judgment ; because as thou  
 art, so are we in this world.

## C H A P. XXVI.

Verse 1 to 14. " Our Lord again foretels his  
 " death. The ointment poured on his bo-  
 " dy for his burial."

Adored be thy obedience to thy Father, and  
 love to poor sinners, which continued firm in the  
 view of thy being betrayed to be crucified. How  
 blind is human wisdom in spiritual things, when  
 the mind is not enlightened by grace ! Men of  
 the greatest reputation for religion and learning,  
 and



and of the greatest authority, were enemies to thee, and consulted to take away thy life. Lord, save us from every degree of such blindness and hardness of heart. We would be like the woman who poured the precious ointment on thy head. Nothing is too precious : nothing is precious enough for thee. Some of the disciples disapproved of what she did, saying, To what purpose is this waste ? But she, who had acted from a sincere affection and regard to thy glorious person, was happy to be defended and approved by thee. Thou wast pleased to declare, that she had wrought a good work on thee ; and that this ointment was poured on thy body for thy burial, which was soon to happen ; and further to promise, (which has been visibly fulfilled above these seventeen hundred years,) that wheresoever this gospel should be preached, this action of the woman shall be told for a memorial of her. Lord, give us to spare no cost in warrantable expressions of regard and veneration for thy blessed name ; and save us from the spirit of those complainers, who grudged the expence, and pretended care for the poor. To the poor we have always opportunity of doing good : may we be kind to them ; but may we remember, that there are special seasons of expressing regard and affection to thy holy name, which ought by no means to be omitted.

Verse 14 to 17. " Judas betrays him for thirty  
" pieces of silver."

How dreadful was the sin of Judas ! What could be his motive to commit such a horrid crime ? He was covetous. But surely thirty pieces of silver (the ransom of a slave) was a poor

poor bribe: he might have got much more. Perhaps he was irritated to revenge by thy saying formerly of the twelve apostles, "One of you is a devil." Perhaps he did not think that matters would go so far; and expected, that thou wouldst deliver thyself out of their hands, and he would enjoy the bribe. O merciful Saviour, keep us from covetousness, and from revenge and fullness, and from doing a base or sinful thing, in hopes that the consequences of it may not be so bad. Lord, keep us from giving place to the devil. Keep us from living in any secret sin. Lord, suffer us not to betray thee in any manner: any other hell would be preferable to this. But we trust, thou who hast kept Satan from that power over us which our sins deserved, wilt deliver us entirely from him, and destroy all his works in our souls.

Verse 17 to 26. "The passover. — Lord, is it I?"

Thou shewedst thy power over the hearts of men, and thy foreknowledge of the minutest circumstances, in giving orders to thy disciples where to prepare the passover. Lord, give us the greater happiness of thy dwelling in our hearts. Thou sawest the treachery of Judas, and warnedst him of his misery, that it had been good for him by whom thou wast betrayed, that he had never been born. But he was so obdurate, he would take no warning; yea, had the impudence to say, "Master, is it I?" O merciful Son of God, keep us from a hard heart, and a seared conscience, and a tempting devil. Thy other disciples were jealous of themselves, and were afraid every one it should be he. Lord, we  
 flee

flee to thee to deliver us from all sin, more especially from enormous wickedness; for what is not a fallen spirit capable of, when joining with Satan, and entangled by him.

Verse 26 to 31. "The institution of the  
"supper."

The treason of Judas, and the weakness of the other apostles, all whom thou sawest about to forsake thee that very night, and one of them to deny thee; all this did not hinder thy appointing the holy supper, that memorial of thy dying love to perishing sinners. Many waters could not quench this love, neither could the floods drown it. It is worthy to be had in remembrance through all eterniry. Thou didst bless the bread, and break it, and give it to thy disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me." Lord, we are not worthy that thou shouldst come under our roof, much less to eat of thy body and blood; but thou hast declared, that except we eat thy flesh, and drink thy blood, we can have no life in us. O give us true, divine, saving faith, to feed upon thee daily; and when thou callest us to eat at the communion table, give us that faith in a lively exercise, that we may receive and feed upon the broken bread as thy body given for us. And O give us to remember thee with suitable affection; with godly sorrow for our sins which thou bearest in thy body upon the tree; and with superlative love to him who so loved us, and gave himself for us; and with the love of the dearest friends and brothers to all thine. Thou didst also give them the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new testament  
" in

"in my blood, which is shed for you." Lord Jesus, we bless thee for the new covenant, which is thy testament, sealed with thy blood. With our whole heart we embrace the promises of it : we believe them : Lord, help our unbelief. We wait for the accomplishment of them, like those that wait for the morning. Oh when wilt thou indeed write thy laws on our hearts, and put them in our minds ? Oh be our God, and make us thy people : make us all to know thee, from the least to the greatest : and, according to thy gracious word, be merciful to our unrighteousness, and our sins and iniquities do thou remember no more. This new covenant, made by thy Father, and sealed with thy blood, in which also thy holy Spirit is promised, is all our salvation ; and it is the highest desire, O Lord, thou knowest, of some of us, (oh let it be the highest desire of us all,) to have the promises of it fulfilled in us. We look to thee with humble expectation that they shall be so ; for thy Father is a God of truth, and thou art the Amen, the faithful and true witness, and thy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Here we rest waiting and hoping, and blessing thy gracious name, Oh Jehovah, for what thou hast already done for us unworthy, hell-deserving creatures. Glory, glory, glory, to thy name for ever and ever. Oh how pleasant will it be, Lamb of God, to join with that innumerable multitude who have washed their robes in thy blood, in singing the songs of heaven to thy Father, and Thee, and the Holy Spirit for evermore. Then we shall drink with thee of that new wine in the kingdom of thy Father, and shall be filled with the Holy Ghost above the apostles themselves at the day of Pentecost, for they were still upon earth. Thy joy shall be in us, and our joy shall be full. In

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this blessed hope we would now begin to sing in this valley of tears, as thou hast given us an example, by singing a hymn with thy disciples before going to the mount of Olives, where thy great and bitter sufferings were to begin. Tho' now for a season, if need be, we are in heaviness thro' manifold temptations; yet may we greatly rejoice in thy salvation which is to be revealed, and never forget thy praise.

Verse 31 to 36. "Peter's denial, and the flight  
"of all the rest, foretold."

Thou knowest all the circumstances of thy sufferings, and the scriptures predicting them. In this text concerning the smiting of the shepherd, and scattering the sheep, we see that great truth of thy equality with thy Father, who calleth thee, "The man that is my fellow;" and another awful truth, "That he commanded the sword of justice to awake against thee." O wonderful mystery! what must the evil of sin be? and what must be that love, which made thee give thy only Son, O infinite God, to be a sacrifice for thy enemies? Though thou sawest, compassionate Saviour, that thy disciples would be offended in thee, and basely desert thee; thy love made thee comfort them by saying, "After I am  
"risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." But they were so self-confident, and secure of their own strength, that they undertook, "tho'  
"they should die with thee," not to deny thee. And Peter in particular, who was to deny thee that very night before the cock crowing, vehemently protested, that though all men should be offended because of thee, yet would he never be offended. Alas! how little do men, even thy  
sincere

sincere disciples, know what they are capable of! Lord, keep us from self-confidence. May we ever be sensible of our own weakness, and rely on thee for strength; and do thou make thy strength perfect in our weakness.

Verse 36 to 47. "The sorrow of the Redeemer's soul, and his prayers in Gethsemane."

Lord Jesus, we would humbly follow thee in our meditations to the place where thy deep sufferings were to begin. Oh fix our hearts, and put and keep them in a right frame. We see thee taking thy eleven disciples along with thee to Gethsemane. It was night. Thou saidst to the rest, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." And thou tookest with thee Peter, James, and John, the same three who were lately witnesses of thy transfiguration, that they might now be witnesses of thy sorrow and agony. And in their presence thou began to be sorrowful, and very heavy, and didst even express thy grief and anguish of heart in these words: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." O amazing humiliation! to be reduced to complain to these poor weak men, who were soon to forsake thee, and to desire their sympathy by watching with thee. What must have been that deadly sorrow, that oppressed thy soul in this hour of darkness! who can conceive the greatness of it? This sorrow thou enduredst for our sins, and the sins of such as we. O why do not the thoughts of it break our hard stupid hearts? Thy sorrow was so exceeding great, that thou didst retire even from these thy intimate friends. Thou hadst

work to do with thy Father, in which no creature could help thee. And now thou fallest on thy face, and prayest with strong cries and tears, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Was it the nearer view of thy terrible sufferings, that made thee pray thus? or was it rather the present anguish and deadly sorrow oppressing thy soul, from which thou didst ask deliverance? It seems rather to have been the last; for thou didst never repent of thy undertaking to die for thy people, according to the will of thy Father. And thy apostle says, that "in the days of thy flesh, when thou hadst offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save thee from death, thou wast heard in that thou fearedst." Thou wast heard in this petition; for thy sorrowful anguish passed away, and thou didst with fresh alacrity go on to meet thy enemies. An angel was sent to strengthen thee, and to suggest comfort to thy afflicted soul; while being in an agony, thou prayedst more earnestly, and thy sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. O merciful Saviour, how great the love in thy heart, which all this oppression could not extinguish! and how dreadful was the pressure of the sins which thou bearest in thy innocent soul! We trust, thy agony will be our deliverance from eternal despair. We see, Lord, thy most earnest prayer was attended with perfect resignation. O give us the same mind. We see also thy kind and charitable way of speaking to thy dejected, but too careless disciples. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." This is very comfortable to us. O give us to watch and pray,

pray, that we enter not into temptation. Give us to watch with thee the short hour of this life.

Verse 47 to 57. "Our Lord is apprehended,  
"and all his disciples forsake him."

Lord God, keep us from all sin, especially from betraying thee, like Judas, with a kiss. Thou sufferedst that traitor to approach thy sacred person, and to kiss thee: surely thou wilt not reject a soul that really desires to worship thee. According to thy command, (Psalm Ild, last,) he saluted thee respectfully. Lord, keep us from honouring thee with our lips, while our hearts are far from thee. Let our veneration be expressed by deeds, as well as words. Thy meekness towards him is very remarkable: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" O give us meekness. When Peter would have defended thee by the sword, and struck off Malchus's ear, thou wouldst not suffer him to proceed in this way. Thou couldst easily have obtained twelve legions of angels from thy Father, had it been thy intention to repel thy enemies by force. But this was not in thy view: thou patiently waitedst the accomplishment of the scriptures; and instead of doing violence to thy enemies, thou touchedst the wounded man, and healedst him. Give us thus to do good for evil. O blessed Lord, how happy is it to be one of thy disciples! Thou canst easily set all right, which their rashness or imprudence does wrong. While thou rebukedst Peter, thou madest reparation for his fault. At the same time, thy innocent soul was not insensible of the injurious treatment thou receivedst from these wicked men, as appears from these words: "Are ye come out as against a thief,



“ with swords and staves to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and you laid no hold on me.” But the scriptures were fulfilled, that “ thou wast to be numbered amongst transgressors.” Lord, give us grace willingly to suffer shame for thy sake. At that time all the disciples forsook thee, and fled, and thus gave proof of human weakness and baseness, and of the truth of thy prediction. Thus thou wast left alone; but thy Father was with thee still: but the time was coming, when thy Father also was to forsake thee. O Lamb of God, how great were thy sufferings! and there was none to help thee when thou stoodst in greatest need. Give us in the deepest distress to remember how thou wast forsaken. We trust thou wilt never forsake our souls,

Verse 57 to 69. “ Jesus is led away to Caiaphas the high priest.”

Thy enemies so thirsted for thy blood, that they met that very night to condemn thee. But they were at a loss for a pretext: they therefore sought false witness against thee; but providence counteracted them in this attempt. They could find none. At last appeared two, who accused thee of saying, that thou wast able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days: thus misrepresenting what thou spakest concerning the temple of thy body. To such an accusation thou wast silent: but when the high priest adjured thee by the living God, to tell whether thou wast the Messiah, the Son of God, thou wouldst not be silent any longer, but madest that good confession, “ That thou art the Messiah, the Son of God; and that hereafter they should see thee sitting

“ sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” But this good confession was pronounced blasphemy, and thou wast judged guilty of death. Then did they spit in thy face, and buffet thee, and smite thee with their hands, saying, “ Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee.” O Son of God, the brightness of thy Father’s glory, and the express image of his person, what indignity didst thou submit to! Here we see what shame is due to sin. Thou enduredst all with divine patience : for this let every knee bow to thee, and every tongue proclaim thy glory. Blessed be God, that face which was once deformed and defiled with spittle, and swollen with strokes, now shines in heaven above the lustre of all angels. Glory be to thy righteous Father, who hath exalted thee in proportion to the depth of thy humiliation. Who would value either the censure or the praise of this blind and wicked world, after what they did to thee? Lord, help us to suffer with cheerfulness whatever they shall inflict for righteousness sake.

Verse 69 to 75. “ Peter’s denial.”

We read a little before, that Peter followed thee afar off, and went in with the servants to see the end. Now at the first temptation in this bad company he falls, and denies before them all, that he understood what was said, when he was charged with being with Jesus of Galilee. Soon after he denies with an oath, “ I do not know the man.” And, lastly, he begins to curse and to swear, saying, “ I know not the man.” Alas! what is become of all his resolution now! Lord, give us to profit by this

striking example. Keep us from self-confidence, and from preferring ourselves to others. Keep us from pronouncing better of ourselves, than thy word of truth does. Keep us from following thee afar off. Keep us from seeking shelter in wicked company. And, O merciful Saviour, give us Peter's repentance. He went out, and wept bitterly. He durst no more compare himself with others, when thou saidst to him, " Lovest thou me more than these ? " He exhorted others to be clothed with humility, and to pass the time of their sojourning here in the fear of God. He was effectually cured of the sinful fear of man ; for he declared before the whole sanhedrim, his attachment to thy cause, in the most public manner. Such was the effect of thy strengthening grace, when all his own courage was shamefully defeated. Glory to thee for thy mercy in receiving such a sinner into favour, and in giving him repentance. Thou prayedst for him, that his faith might not fail ; and thou turnedst and lookedst upon him, when he had denied thee. Lord Jesus, give us to remember, that if we are thine, thou prayest for us ; and look upon us with that pitying eye, with which thou lookedst upon Peter, that we may get true repentance, and may never draw back unto perdition. Lord, let the sincerity of our repentance appear as Peter's did ; and let all this love of thine be a powerful restraint from sin,

## C H A P. XXVII.

Verse 1 to 11. "Judas repents, and becomes  
"his own executioner."

How different was the event with regard to Peter and Judas ! He also had a kind of repentance, which made him return the thirty pieces of silver with abhorrence and anguish, and publicly confess to the very persons who had employed him, that he had sinned in betraying innocent blood. But meeting with neglect and contempt from them, he went and hanged himself. He did not go to thee, and fall at thy feet to implore pardon; but gave himself up to despair. Lord, give us also to profit by this dreadful example of the end of covetousness, and hypocrisy, and want of sincere regard and love to thee, and no more applying to thee for mercy. How strangely did the traitor, at the same time that he betrayed thee, bear testimony to thy innocence ! Thus thy all-ruling providence turns the designs of thy enemies to the advancing thy kingdom. It is also remarkable, that these cruel hypocrites, who scrupled not to thirst after thy innocent blood, but scrupled to put the price of it into the treasury, while they bought with it a field to bury strangers in, fulfilled the scripture prophecies, and perpetuated the memory of their own wickedness, as the field was called, "The field of blood."

Verse 11 to 15. "Christ's silence before Pilate."

Thou didst own thyself to be the King of the Jews ; but to the many accusations of thy enemies



mies thou answeredst nothing. What could be the cause, may I humbly enquire, of thy silence, Lord? One reason seems to be, that the scripture might be fulfilled, which says, "I as a deaf man heard not." And again, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep is dumb before its shearers, so opened he not his mouth." Thou appearedst there to suffer, the just for the unjust, to bear the sins of many transgressors; and therefore, though thou hadst no sin of thy own, thou wast silent, and meekly submittedst. As this was peculiar to thee, as the Saviour of the world, surely thou dost not call us to imitate thee herein; but if we are falsely accused, ought we not, like thy servant Paul, to answer for ourselves? At the same time, grant, O Lord, that we may be chiefly concerned to have a conscience void of offence; and if unjust men will speak evil against us falsely, may we commit our cause to thee. Lord, guide us.

Pilate marvelled greatly. It was a new thing to him, to have one brought before him as a criminal, who did not answer the accusations of his adversaries. Thy silence might also reproach him for his carelessness in not making a strict enquiry, which it was his business to do, and which would have effectually vindicated thee; for he knew that they had delivered thee for envy.

Verse 15 to 18. and verse 20 to 24. "Barab-  
bas is preferred."

He therefore sought to deliver thee out of their hands, but in such a timid and irresolute manner, as only increased thy sufferings. He  
first

first thought to have got thee released, by putting thee in competition with Barabbas, a robber, and a murderer ; but the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. They cried out, " Not this man, but Barabbas." And being asked by Pilate what he should do with thee, they all said, " Let him be crucified." And being urged, " Why, what evil hath he done ? they cried out " the more, Let him be crucified." Thus, Lord Jesus, a robber and a murderer escaped, and thou wast given to be crucified. Thou camest in the room of sinners : they were released, and thou wast put in their place. Adored be the love of thy Father, and thy love which so ordered it. But surely the blindness and wickedness of thy enemies was great, which could prefer Barabbas to thee. Let us never seek honour from the wicked, who thus treated our Saviour.

Verse 19, 24, 25. " Pilate's wife sends to him.

" He washeth his hands before the multitude."

Thy innocence was testified formerly by Judas, and now by the wife of Pilate, and by Pilate once and again : even by these mouths thy innocence was proclaimed ; yet the blind rage of thy enemies continued till all was accomplished. Lord, keep us from being like Pilate, or like the Jews. He met with many checks : his wife gave him warning ; he was convinced in his own conscience ; yet he had not resolution to do his duty, but yielded to the multitude, through fear, or a desire to please them, vainly flattering himself, that his washing his hands publicly before them would free him from the guilt. Lord, let  
us

us never deceive ourselves in this manner. Give us Christian fortitude, which will be frightened or flattered into sin by no powers on earth, and which will bear up against inward temptations, no less dangerous. O save us from that blindness and hardness, which made these wicked men cry out, "His blood be on us, and on our children." They have obtained their impious wish, to the conviction of all serious spectators, these seventeen hundred years past. Lord Jesus, now let them be converted; and let thy blood be upon them, and upon us, and our children, as the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Verse 27 to 31. "Jesus is mocked by the soldiers."

It was not enough that the Jewish nation shewed such virulence against thee; the Gentiles were now to join them. The Roman soldiers, a whole band of them, gathered about thee to insult thee. And first they stripped thee, and clothed thee with some casten scarlet robe; and that they might give thee the other ensigns of mock-royalty, they platted thorns into a kind of crown, and put it on thy head, and gave thee a reed in thy right hand for a sceptre; and then bowed the knee before thee, saying, in a mocking way, "Hail, King of the Jews." Then their contempt turned into rage, and they spit upon thee, and snatched the reed out of thy hand to smite thee with it. Lord, these things ought to fill us with astonishment and horror, and, at the same time, with admiration and praise. The more we see them insulting thee, the more we desire to glorify thy blessed name. Thou art indeed  
the

the King of Zion. Hail Son of God, and Saviour of mankind ! We rejoice that thou art now cloathed with glory and honour by thy Father, and crowned with the brightest and most beautiful crown in heaven ; and hast a glorious robe, in which thy name is written, " The word of " God ; " and hast a sceptre of righteousness, which becomes an iron rod against thy incorrigible enemies. Blessed be God, that now, instead of shame and spitting, thou receivest the united homage of saints and angels, who proclaim with a loud voice, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain " to receive wisdom, and strength, and power, " and riches, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Lord, keep us from a mocking insulting spirit : may we hate it in every instance, and the more because it exerted itself against thee.

Verse 31 to 33. " They led him away to Golgotha. Simon bears his cross."

After they had mocked thee, they took off the robe, and put thy own raiment upon thee again ; while thy sacred body by these changes suffered new pain, after it had been cruelly scourged. They were not satisfied with all that they had done, but led thee away to crucify thee. And now it would seem, being so weakened by what thou hadst already suffered, and the way to Golgotha being long, and up-hill, there was occasion for one to bear thy cross, which thou wast ready to sink under. Simon of Cyrene, whom they met coming out of the country, they compelled to perform that office. Surely it was the greatest honour that ever any man had. We are ready to wish we had been in his place ; but thou hast other work for us. Make us ready to bear the cross  
which



which thou hast appointed for us, and daily to take it up with chearfulness, following thee. Perhaps Simon was backward at first; but how would he be encouraged by looking to thee, and observing thy patience and meekness; and we doubt not, Lord, but thou gavest him great consolation afterwards: and his sons were among thy disciples, it would seem, by the particular mention made of them: probably thou madest him the instrument of their conversion.

Verse 34, 35. "The crucifixion."

Golgotha was the place of thy crucifixion, where, as the name seems to denote, were many skulls and bones of the dead. There, O Prince of life, thou didst encounter death as it were within his own territories, and gainedst an eternal victory over him for thyself and all thy followers. They gave thee vinegar to drink, mingled with gall. Thus in every circumstance the scripture was fulfilled: and they crucified thee, piercing thy hands and feet, and fastening them with nails to the wood of the cross. We remember, Lord, thy apostle says, "Our old man is crucified with thee, that the body of sin might be destroyed." Oh let our corruptions be crucified. Give us to treat them as thou, O Lord, for their sakes wast treated. May we give them vinegar and gall to drink: may we fasten them to thy cross. Let us not spare them who had no pity upon thee; and by thy cross, O Lord of glory, may the world be crucified to us, and we to the world.

Verse

Verse 35. "They cast lots on his garments."

Here was another very extraordinary instance of the fulfilling of the prophecies concerning thee; that lots should be cast upon thy garments. This was owing to a seemingly small circumstance, that thy coat was without seam. The other part of thy garments, the four soldiers who crucified thee divided equally among them; but they would not rend the coat, but cast lots for it. All thy clothes could be of no great value, for thou didst not clothe thyself sumptuously. That the soldiers should be at so great pains in dividing them, seems rather to have proceeded from wantonness and mockery, than from covetousness: or perhaps it might be from covetousness, like Judas, who betrayed thee for so small a sum. Lord, keep us from a carnal, worldly spirit. These soldiers cared not what became of thee, but fell a dividing thy garments. Lord, keep our eyes and our hearts fixed on thee.

Verse 36. "They watched him."

They needed not have watched thee for any desire thou hadst to be taken down from the cross; for thou wast determined to drink the cup which thy Father gave thee, and to suffer till all things were accomplished.

Verse 37. "The title on the cross."

Whilst thou art thus hanging on the cross on thy pained hands and feet, we see the title set over thy head by Pilate's orders, written in three different languages, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Pilate had nothing else  
to

to accuse thee of, but that thou wast the King of the Jews ; and perhaps he might intend by this to express his contempt of the Jewish nation ; for his hatred might rise the more against them, after he had yielded to them against his conscience. But whatever were his motives, he seems here to resemble Caiaphas, who prophesied of thy dying for the nation. He, by this title on thy cross, which the Jews could not prevail on him to alter, proclaims thee to be the Saviour, the Messiah, and the King of Zion ; and this notice he gives to the world in three of the most known languages. The time was approaching, when it was to be published in a greater number by the apostles, on the day of Pentecost. Blessed Son of God ! we rejoice to see thee conquering thine enemies, and triumphing even upon the cross. That title, which many of the spectators read at that time, we still read with admiration and joy. Thou art Jesus, the Saviour, who savest thy people from their sins. Thou art Jesus of Nazareth, an obscure and despised place ; yet thy Father hath anointed thee King of Zion. Thou art the King of the Jews ; of those who are Jews, not outwardly in the flesh, or in the letter, but inwardly in the heart and spirit, whose praise is not of man, but of God. Thou art the King of Israel ; of those who are Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile. Lord Jesus, make us such. Oh give us, like the first Israel, the spirit of grace and supplication, that we may prevail.

Verse 38. " The two thieves."

Thou wast numbered with transgressors. To make thy death more ignominious, there were two thieves crucified with thee, and thy cross  
was

was in the midst. Yet here, as in many other instances, thy divine glory broke through the thick vail. One of these malefactors thou gloriously rescuedst from the powers of darkness in thy lowest humiliation, and by his tongue madest thy salvation and thy kingdom to be acknowledged when thou wast expiring on a cross. How awful is it to hear one of these malefactors railing on thee! The greatest afflictions, the approach of death, will not open the eyes of infidels. And how delightful is it to hear the repentance and faith of the other! He could not bear the hardness and impiety of his companion, but rebuked him. He confessed the justice of his own punishment; but he acquitted thee, and with a strong but humble faith he put up his prayer to thee, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Give us the dispositions that this penitent had. Give us his zeal against blasphemy, and cruelty, and impiety. Give us his sense of the justice of punishment for sin. Give us his faith in thee, by which he not only confessed thy spotless innocence before thy enemies; but, when thou wast dying on a cross, owned thy kingdom, and desired to be remembered when thou shouldst come into it. And give us likewise his humility, and resignation. He desired only to be remembered: he left it to thee to give him what token of thy favour thou pleasest; only that thou wouldst remember him. And what a gracious answer gavest thou to his humble prayer! "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Oh comfortable words! words which might even suspend the pains of crucifixion. Happy soul! what were all the terrors of death to him now. He was assured, that on that very day he should be with

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thee in the heavenly paradise. Lord Jesus, grant that when we die, we may be exercised as he was, and may obtain the same answer. We desire no more. Lord, remember us, and receive our spirits, to be where thou art. This is paradise: this is heaven, to be with thee. Heaven itself would be the shadow of death, if thou wast not there. How transporting is the thought on a dying day! this day we shall be with our Redeemer. Lord, let us not deceive ourselves: we trust thou wilt not.

Verse 39 to 45. "Jesus is mocked and reviled upon the cross."

Never, that we hear of, was a dying person reviled. When malefactors are dying, the indignation at them turns into pity; but all sorts of people seem to have agreed to revile and insult thee in thy pains. The passengers upbraided thee, and, wagging their heads, said, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself." They bid thee prove thy being the Son of God by coming down from the cross. The priests and elders, persons of a graver character, joined with the meanest of the mob in mocking thee. Where are his miracles now? Why does he not save himself from the cross? If he be the Messiah, let him come down, and we will believe him. And while they continued their cruel derision, they used the very words of scripture which the Psalmist long before had spoken concerning thee; "He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him." The soldiers also mocked thee, coming to thee, and offering thee vinegar, and saying, "If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself."

The

The very thieves crucified with thee joined in these bitter insults. Oh patient Saviour! teach us what we should learn from all this. Surely the contempt or the honour of a wicked world, blinded with ignorance and sin, is little to be regarded, after the treatment they gave thee. But tho' thou sufferedst most unjustly at their hands, the contempt and shame poured upon thee was the due reward of our sins. O how great was thy love to bear it for us! Glorious Saviour, give us to rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer shame for thy name. These words of the Psalmist, some of which were fulfilled in thee, are affecting:

" O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my  
 " sins are not hid from thee. Let not them that  
 " wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed  
 " for my sake. Let not those that seek thee be  
 " confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. Be-  
 " cause for thy sake I have born reproach, shame  
 " hath covered my face. I am become a stranger  
 " to my brethren, and an alien to my mother's  
 " children. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten  
 " me up, and the reproaches of them that re-  
 " proached thee are fallen upon me. When I  
 " wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that  
 " was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also  
 " my garment, and I became a proverb to them.  
 " They that sit in the gate spake against me,  
 " and I was the song of the drunkards. But as  
 " for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in  
 " an acceptable time. Thou hast known my re-  
 " proach, and my shame, and my dishonour;  
 " mine adversaries are all before thee. Reproach  
 " hath broken my heart, and I am full of hea-  
 " vinefs: and I looked for some to take pity,  
 " but there was none; and for comforters, but  
 " I found none. They gave me also gall for  
 " my

“ my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” It is more honourable to suffer for thy name, than to have the praise of kings. And the time is soon coming, when thy servants who have been most despised and persecuted for righteousness sake, shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. There thou art now highly exalted ; and because thou so humbledst thyself, thou hast a name above every name. Oh when shall all the inhabitants of the earth have their eyes opened to see thy glory, as it is seen in heaven.

Verse 45. “ The darkness.”

There was darkness over all the land from twelve o'clock to three in the afternoon. The sun was darkened. Some other strange events at thy crucifixion, such as the earthquake, and the rending of the rocks, may be said by infidels to have been in the course of nature, though they happened at that time ; but this darkness of the sun cannot be accounted for by ordinary causes. What was the language of it, but that those who were perpetrating such a deed, were not fit objects for the sun to shine upon, but deserved everlasting darkness. And there seems to be a suitableness betwixt that preternatural darkness, and the inward darkness that was at that time upon thy pure and innocent soul. Lord, save us from the darkness of sin and of hell. Any other darkness instead of these, however uncomfortable : but do thou, Lord Jesus Christ, deliver us from these. And we would also humbly deprecate the darkness of desertion : rather send us any affliction of body, than leave our souls without the light of thy countenance.

Verse

Verse 45, compared with Mark xv. 25. "The  
" hours of the crucifixion marked."

We observe, Lord, that the holy Spirit is careful by the Evangelists to mark the hours of thy suffering. They began to crucify thee at the third hour, and it was at the sixth hour that dreadful darkness commenced, which continued till the ninth hour, when thy sufferings were at their height, and soon ended in death. Every moment of thy sufferings was of unspeakable importance; but though those of thy servants are not to be compared with thine, they may be assured for their comfort, that every hour, every minute of them, is reckoned by thee, and they will soon come to an end. Lord Jesus, give us the comfort of this when we are called to suffer according to thy will, upon a death-bed; or at whatever time, or in whatever manner thou seest fit.

Verse 46 to 50. "The desertion."

This is the most awful and affecting part of all thy sufferings. What an inconceivable oppression must there have been upon thy soul, when thou thus criedst out before all thy enemies, that thy God had forsaken thee. None of thy former sufferings, however sharp and bitter, made thee cry out in this manner. Though all thy friends and disciples forsook thee, thou wast not left alone, for thy Father was with thee. But now when thou lookedst for help and comfort from thy Father, he was gone: He also had forsaken thee. Ah why? Thou always didst the things that pleased him, and thou wast just now obeying him in undergoing these unexampled suf-



ferings; and he had again and again declared his delight in thee by a voice from heaven. What could be the reason then of thy merciful Father forsaking thee in this time of greatest need? Surely he never loved thee better than now. It was not upon thy account, but upon account of these sins, these great and numerous sins, which thou wast bearing the guilt of. It was that thy sacrifice might be compleat. Thy God forsook thee for a time, that we might not be everlastingly forsaken. Glory be to him who found in his heart to do it: glory be to thee who enduredst it, and whose soul clave to God, thy God, in the greatest darkness. Thou hast exhorted thy followers to do the same by thy prophet, who, when speaking of thy sufferings, says, "Who is among  
" you that feareth the Lord, and that walketh  
" in darkness, and hath no light; let him trust  
" in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his  
" God." Lord Jesus, strengthen us to comply with this encouraging invitation in the darkest hour.

When we read the psalm which begins with these lamentable words uttered by thee upon the cross, how wonderfully do we find it accomplished in the various parts of it. Blessed be thy name, that it ends with as much joy and triumph, as it begins with sorrow.

Strange that thy doleful cry to God should also be turned into ridicule! This man, said they, calleth for Elias. Whether they spoke from ignorance, or in derision, thy words were despised, and every circumstance contributed to increase thy sufferings.

Verse 50. "Jesus dies."

Having again cried with a loud voice, thou gavest up thy soul to thy Father, bowing thy head, and saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Help us, Lord, to die in the same manner, committing our departing souls into the hands of thy Father and our Father, and into thy hands, saying, with thy martyr Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive our spirits." How unspeakable was now the joy of thy innocent soul, which had so lately been overwhelmed with sorrow! A like change shall death work on all who are thine, in their measure.

Verse 51 to 54. "The prodigies at his death."

The trembling of the earth under their feet, and the rending of the rocks, were proper means to awaken the attention of that vast multitude that were convened at thy death, and to make them reflect upon the dreadful deed they had been committing, or consenting to. In the rending of the vail of the temple, we seem to behold thy Father departing from the temple, and opening a way into the holiest of all by thy death. There was also another very wonderful event in the resurrection of many saints about the time of thy resurrection, who went into Jerusalem, and appeared to many. Who these saints were, is not told, nor how their bodies were disposed of after they had walked about a while. But we need not be anxious to know this, for the time is fast coming, when all the graves shall be opened, and the bodies of thy saints of all nations and times shall be raised up in glory. Lord, make us to know

that spiritual resurrection of our souls from the death of sin, by thy holy Spirit, and we shall be sure to partake of the other. And give us to know what thy apostle speaks of having our old man crucified with thee, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; for he that is dead, is freed from sin. May we reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God through thee: and like as thou wast raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so may we also walk in newness of life.

Verse 54 to 57. "The effect of all these things  
"on the spectators."

Some of them, as the centurion, feared greatly, and glorified God, and said, "Certainly this was  
"a righteous man: truly this was the Son of  
"God." Others smote their breasts; and thy acquaintance and followers stood afar off beholding these things with deep concern. Only the chief priests and Pharisees continued obdurate. Lord, grant that our hearts may be suitably affected with every remembrance of thy sufferings, Save us from spiritual blindness and hardness.

Verse 57 to 62. "His burial."

In the account of this affecting and astonishing event, we see many remarkable circumstances. Joseph, an honourable counsellor, and a man of wealth, appeared now among thy friends. He was shy before, but now he went boldly to Pilate, and craved thy body. To the weakest and most timorous thou canst give boldness in time of the greatest need. Pilate commanded thy body

to be given him, but not till he had enquired of the centurion whether thou hadst been any while dead. Thus the certainty of thy death is confirmed by an unexpected enquiry. Joseph got the dead body of his Saviour to dispose of. With what affections would he do this ! He was joined in the work by Nicodemus ; and these two took care that thy sacred body should be honourably interred. Oh humble and self-denied Saviour, thou hadst not a chamber to receive thee at thy birth, nor a house to dwell in during thy life ; and at thy death thou wast laid in a borrowed grave. We would take great pleasure in our thoughts, to go into that garden where Joseph's sepulchre was, and to see where they laid thy body. The grave is no more frightful, but a pleasant refreshing bed, since thou wast pleased to consecrate it. The places where the bodies of thy saints sleep, are pleasant ; for their souls are with thee in heaven ; and of their dust thou wilt lose nothing, but wilt raise it up in glory. Blessed be thy name, the appearance of the grave is quite altered ; the clods of the valley are sweet. We will not by thy grace fear to go down to the grave ; for thou wilt bring us up again : and in the mean time, we trust thou wilt receive our souls to be where thou art, for that is all our desire. Amen.

Verse 62 to 66. " The stone sealed, and a  
" watch set at the sepulchre."

Here is a remarkable instance of the jealousy of thy enemies over-ruled to thy glory, and to the confirmation of the faith of thy disciples. They called thee a deceiver, and represented thy poor simple followers, as capable of forging a  
story



story of thy resurrection, and imposing it upon the people; and consulted with Pilate how to prevent such an imposture, and got a guard of soldiers to watch, and sealed the stone that lay at the entrance of the sepulchre. But all this precaution was vain against the truth and power of God.

## C H A P. XXVIII.

Verse 1 to 9. The appearance of the angel,  
“and his words to the women at the sepulchre.”

The sight of this heavenly messenger made the soldiers tremble, and deprived them of all strength and spirit. The poor women would therefore have been quite overwhelmed with fear, if the angel had not comforted them with these reviving words: “Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said; come, see the place where the Lord lay.” May not they, O Lord, take comfort from these words, who can say, “Thou knowest that we seek thee with our hearts daily. There is nothing in the world we desire in comparison with thy favour, conformity to thee, and the enjoyment of thy presence.” Should not such therefore banish all slavish fear, and look with pleasure into the grave; and, above all, rejoice when they lift up their eyes to heaven, and by faith see thee exalted there at the right hand of God. The angel commanded the women to give notice to the other disciples of thy resurrection, and to assure them, that they should see thee in Galilee. They ran with great joy to carry these glad tidings, though they were not yet

yet free from that fear which the appearance of the angel had struck them with. Lord Jesus, should not we, if we are thine, run with joy to see thee, though the terror of the grave intervene? It is awful to leave the body, and to go into eternity; but the joy of meeting with thee ought to be greatly superior to this fear. Lord, work it in us; for without thee we can do nothing. Let thy grace be sufficient for us; let thy strength be made perfect in our weakness.

Verse 9, 10. "Jesus meets them."

When they were going to give notice of thy resurrection to their fellow-disciples, they unexpectedly met thee, and were saluted and comforted by thee. What words, O Lord, are these! "Go tell my brethren, that they shall see me." Their forsaking thee in thy distress is all forgotten. "Go tell my brethren!" Lord Jesus, who can sufficiently admire thy grace? O that whilst we are employed in preaching and hearing of thy resurrection, thou wouldst graciously meet us. O that thou wouldst meet us now! we fall at thy feet, and worship thee with the words of Nathaniel, (O make us like him!) "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

Verse 11 to 16. "The chief priests and elders  
"bribe the watch."

The story which the soldiers were bribed to tell, is not only improbable, but contradictory. It is highly improbable, that the poor timorous disciples would attempt such a thing against a guard of soldiers: and it is as improbable, that the soldiers should all be asleep: and if they  
were

were asleep, how could they tell how or what was done? Lord, save us from every degree of that wickedness which contrived this story, and of that blindness and hardness of heart which receives it.

Verse 16 to 20. "Jesus appears to the eleven  
"disciples, and gives them a commission to  
"teach and baptize all nations."

The doubts which some of thy disciples entertained of the reality of thy resurrection, proved afterwards confirmations of it, as in the case of Thomas. Glory to thee for bringing good out of evil. We desire to join with those who worshipped thee, and with joy to hear that "all power is given to thee in heaven and earth." Lord, subdue every thought in our hearts to thy obedience. Thou commandedst thy apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: hence we learn, that Thou and the Holy Ghost are objects of the same divine worship with the Father. Lord, we here recognize and ratify our baptism: we renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and give ourselves up to thee, O Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that thou mayest be our God and Father in him, and we may serve thee as thy obedient and dutiful children. We believe in thee, O Son of God, help our unbelief. O be thou our Saviour, our Prophet, our Priest, our King, our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption. Make us thy true disciples and servants. This is our earnest desire. O holy Spirit, we beseech thee, come and take full possession of our souls and bodies. Be our sanctifier, our comforter, our guide, and helper ;  
and

and let all our powers and capacities be employed as thy instruments in doing thy will. Glory be to God, Father, Son, and Spirit, for ever and ever.

Thy apostles were ordered to teach mankind to observe all things whatsoever thou hast commanded. Lord, give us carefully to remember thy precepts, and rightly to understand them, and conscientiously to put them in practice. Let us never be ashamed of thy words: may our hearts be cast into the mould of thy gospel; and the whole and every part of our conduct be formed upon it. We bless thee for the promise of thy gracious and powerful presence with thy disciples to the end of the world. May not those who labour in preaching thy word take comfort from thy promise? Lord, be with them in every work of this kind. May they undertake it in thy name, and in thy strength only; and may the thoughts of thy gracious presence set them above all slavish fear, and all sinful pleasing of men.

MARK.



## M A R K.

## C H A P. I. \*

Verse 35. "Jesus rises early, and prays in a  
"solitary place."

**W**E thank thee, Lord, that ever thou madest  
us taste the sweetness of early prayer,  
and of solitary prayer. Lord, teach us to pray  
in thy name, and by the help of thy Spirit.  
Give us to pray with faith. O blessed Saviour,  
we hope thou makest intercession for us in  
heaven.

## C H A P. III.

Verse 1 to 6. "The man who had the wi-  
"thered hand."

Lord, keep us from that hardness of heart,  
which was the object of thy anger and grief.  
Thou lookedst round on thy obstinate and mali-  
cious adversaries with anger : hence we see, that  
anger is not absolutely sinful. At the same time,  
thou wast affected with grief. May we never be  
angry, but upon such occasions as would have  
excited thy anger ; and may we be grieved, as  
thou wast, for the sins and miseries of wicked  
men. Thou saidst to the man who had the wi-

\* Many passages in this Evangelist, and a few in Luke and  
John, are omitted, as being similar to those in Matthew,  
upon which something has been already said. It was thought  
needless to make references to them here, as they are all par-  
ticularly referred to in the margin of the Bible.

thered hand, "Stretch out thy hand, and he stretched it out and it was healed." When thou commandest us to believe, may we, like this man, without objecting our inability, endeavour to comply with thy call; and, O gracious Redeemer, do thou secretly convey the power along with it.

Verse 20, 21. "They said, He is beside himself."

Infinitely wise God! how didst thou humble thyself to suffer such an imputation, and what was the ground of it? Because thou preferredst the work of him that sent thee to thy food. We find afterwards, thou wast said to have a devil, and to be mad. Lord, give us to adhere firmly to the rule of thy word, and of thy blessed example, without being moved at the censures or reproaches of carnal or worldly men. What should we care for the severest of them, after what befel thee? Thou knowest, Lord, that these men, who account serious and earnest religion madness, are themselves mad. They prefer time to eternity, and their own dreams to the wisdom of God. O that thou wouldst awaken them, and make them come to themselves. What poor praise is it to be accounted wise by the world; and what a small matter to be reckoned foolish or mad in their judgment.

## C H A P. IV.

Verse 26 to 30. "The parable of the seed growing imperceptibly."

Lord, grant that the seed of thy grace may really be sown in our hearts; and may we know that

that it is really sown by its growing up. When we compare its different periods, may we find, that it hath evidently grown, though we were not sensible of it in the mean time ; and may it bring forth much fruit. And when all the fruit is brought forth, do thou gather us into thy barn. May thy kingdom spread and grow in this place ; may it do so through the whole earth : and when the harvest is ripe, come and put in the sickle. Lord Jesus, hasten thy work, and come quickly.

## C H A P. V.

Verse 1 to 21. "The man possessed with a  
"legion of unclean spirits."

In this poor man we may see ourselves. No man could bind him ; no not with chains. He had been often bound with fetters and chains ; and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces. Thus it has often been with our resolutions and vows. Always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones. So have we been perplexed and pained with confused thoughts, the fruit of our own wickedness ; but we hope thou hast had pity upon us, O blessed Jesus, as upon him, when thou spakest these compassionate words : "Come out  
"of the man, thou unclean spirit." Yes, Lord, thou hast mercifully interposed, and wrought a great deliverance for some of us. Oh speak again, and drive out the whole legion : let not one of them be left to disturb and defile souls, which, we trust, thou wilt make thy temple, for ever. Oh bring us into the happy condition of  
him

him that had been possessed with the devils, when he was seen with thee sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind. The Gadarenes were afraid when they saw this sight, and began to pray thee to depart out of their coasts. But we would with a holy astonishment admire thy grace in such a change, and, like the man that had been possessed, pray thee that we might be with thee. And, blessed be thy name, though thou didst not suffer him to go along with thee into the ship, thou wilt not hinder us by faith to follow thee all our life long; yea; thou commandest us to follow thee. This is our comfort, our heaven upon earth, to be continually with thee; to awake in the morning seeking thy blessing; to follow thy directions all the day long; to lie down under thy protection at night; and in the silent watches, when we awake, to be still with thee: and we would also tell our friends (as this man was commanded to do,) how great things the Lord hath done for us, and hath had compassion on us.

Verse 36. "Be not afraid; only believe."

Jairus besought thee to come and heal his little daughter, lying at the point of death. Thou wentest along with him. In the mean time, word was sent that she was dead, and that it was needless to trouble thee any further. But thou saidst to him, "Be not afraid; only believe." May we not take comfort from these encouraging words with respect to our souls? They have been not only at the point of death, but dead: yea, we may say, twice dead: yet thou sayest, "Believe in me, and thou shalt be saved. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Lord, let no difficulties deter us from  
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believing



believing. We believe, we blieve that thou art able and willing to save us. Help, Lord, our unbelief.

Verse 43. "And commanded that something should be given her to eat."

We cannot but take notice on this, and many like occasions, of thy care even of the body: how much greater must thy concern be about the immortal soul? Lord, let not then our souls perish with hunger. O give us the bread of life, thou compassionate Saviour!

#### C H A P. VI.

Verse 1 to 7. "He marvelled because of their unbelief."

Lord, save us from being offended at that poverty and those mean circumstances to which thou humbledst thyself for our sakes. The more we know thee in thy humiliation, may we honour thee the more, as we have just cause to do. Lord, deliver us from that dreadful and wretched sin of unbelief, which punishes itself by refusing to receive blessings at thy hand. Lord, give us true faith, and increase it to the highest degree.

#### C H A P. VII.

Verse 31 to 37. "The deaf man who had an impediment in his speech."

We see something singular in the manner of thy working this miracle. Very lately thou healedst the woman of Canaan's daughter by a word: doubtless, thou couldst have cured this man as easily.

easily. The reason of thy taking a different way was, certainly, worthy of thyself, though we cannot pretend to assign it. But in thy leading him aside from the multitude, we think we see their unbelief, which rendered them unworthy to see the miracle performed, and thy declining the applause of such persons. And in thy putting thy fingers into his ears, and spitting and touching his tongue, we cannot but adore thy condescension in performing such mean but kind offices to poor sinners. And in thy looking up to heaven, we observe thy communion with thy Father; and in thy sighing, thy concern for the miseries and perverseness of mankind; according to what was prophesied of thee, that thou wouldst be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. And, lastly, in thy saying, "Be opened," the divine energy of thy word, which can work without any means, and is necessary to make means effectual. Lord, we are naturally deaf to thy voice: we are dumb in thy praises. O be pleased to put thy hand upon us, and heal us. Then shall we hear that voice which is sweeter than any melody, and shall receive daily instruction from the fountain of wisdom: then shall our tongues be like the pen of a ready writer in declaring thy glory.

## C H A P. VIII.

Verse 12. "He sighed deeply in his Spirit."

Here is another instance of thy grief, occasioned by the perverseness of wicked men. Lord, give us the same mind that was in thee. May we have real sorrow from the many instances of impiety, unbelief, and various kinds of wickedness, which we see around us; and may we have

sincere joy from every instance of the advancement of thy kingdom. And let us not be ashamed of that sorrow; but may we be ashamed of vain mirth, of which there was nothing in thee.

Verse 22 to 26. "The blind man at Bethsaida."

This man thou tookest by the hand, and leddest him out of the town; and when thou hadst spit on his eyes, and laid thy hands upon them, thou askedst him if he saw ought. Here is something similar to the manner of thy curing the deaf man, from which like instructions are to be gathered. How happy was he to be led by thy hand! Lord, for thy name's sake lead us; we are naturally blind in the things of God. O do thou take us by the hand: we commit ourselves entirely to thy management. The man at first saw indistinctly; but when thou hadst put thy hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up, he saw every man clearly. Thou hast been graciously pleased to open our eyes a little, and to give us some spiritual light we hope, (for which may thy name be blessed for ever and ever); but our sight, thou knowest, is still weak and indistinct. Lord, put thy hands again upon our eyes, and make us to see clearly.

#### C H A P. IX.

Verse 34 to 50. "The disciples rebuked for their ambition, and warned against of fences in a very awful manner."

Lord, kill pride, and ambition, and vain-glory. Let us not love pre-eminence; but may we be ready

ready to serve all. O make us little children, and give us affectionately to receive all such in thy name. Save us from doing what thou reprov'dst in John, who forbad one casting out devils, because he followed not the apostles. Give that catholic spirit, that candid, and charitable, and forgiving temper, which is suitable to the words spoken by thee on that occasion; and may we rightly understand them. Lord, let us never forget, that the giving a cup of water to any one because he belongs to Christ, shall not go unrewarded; and what a dreadful guilt it is to offend one of the little ones that believe in thee. And if our hand offend us, give us to cut it off; if our foot offend us, give us to cut it off; if our eye offend us, give us to pluck it out: and all this without hesitation or self-pity; remembering, that it is unspeakably better so to do, than to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; and that those terrible words were thrice repeated by thee. Lord, save us from neglecting such a remarkable warning from thy mouth, who art so pitiful, and of tender mercy. Oh give us the salt of thy grace: make us holy, living sacrifices, acceptable to God, through thy merits; and then we shall never be cast into these unquenchable flames, in which every one shall be salted with fire. Lord, season our whole spirit, soul and body, with thy incorruptible grace. O give us true genuine grace, as the appearance of it, without the reality, is of all things the most base and worthless: and give us to have peace with our Christian brethren; and, as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all men.



## C H A P. XII.

Verse 41 to 44. "The widow's two mites."

Here is great comfort to those whose abilities are small, when thou hast given them a heart to serve thee to the utmost of their capacity. Lord, give us such a heart. Let us have no reserves in dealing with thee. Had we a thousand worlds, we hope, by thy grace, we would offer them all. We have only two mites; a weak, sinful, polluted soul, and a diseased decaying body. These, Lord, we would with deep humility beg thee to receive, and to dispose of them as thou pleasest for thy glory. O sanctify them to thyself.

## C H A P. XIII.

Verse 11. "Take no thought before-hand  
"what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that  
"speak, but the Holy Ghost."

Though it may not be right to apply these words to the preaching of thy gospel, or speaking in defence of it in ordinary cases; yet surely we may, agreeably to thy will, make the following petition, which we beg, O heavenly Father, thou wouldst hear for Christ's sake. Give us thy blessed Spirit to apply the whole of Christ's redemption to our souls; to convince, to enlighten, to sanctify, to comfort, to guide, to strengthen us: and give us that help from him in prayer, and meditation, and in preaching and hearing thy word, which thou givest to thy saints. We beg these assistances, which thy word gives all thy servants ground to plead for. O deny them not.

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We will by thy grace trust to them : let us not be ashamed of our hope. Oh fill us with the Holy Ghost, as thy primitive disciples (who were not Apostles nor Evangelists) were. We hope there is no harm in this desire : O that thou wouldst grant it. Yea, thou hast promised, blessed Saviour, that thy Father will give his Spirit to them that ask him, more readily than an earthly parent will give his hungry child bread : we trust therefore he will hear us for thy sake.

## C H A P. XVI.

Verse 3, 4. " They said, Who shall roll us  
" away the stone ? "

Lord, let us not by any difficulties be discouraged from seeking thee : Thou canst remove them all. Thou canst make our fears unexpectedly to vanish.

Verse 7. " Tell his disciples and Peter. "

It is very affecting to observe how careful thy angel was to send information of thy resurrection, and of thy going to meet them, to thy ungrateful disciples, who had all forsaken thee, and to Peter by name, who had denied thee thrice. Undoubtedly he gave this in charge to the women by thy command. O loving and forgiving Saviour ! how soon didst thou forget so great provocations ? Who would not love and serve thee ?

Verse 9. "He appeared first to Mary Magdalene."

This was one of the women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities. She had been possessed with seven devils, till cured by thee. Oh compassionate Saviour, no wonder she tarried at thy sepulchre after the rest, and was unhappy when she could not find her Lord. She had once been in a very melancholy dismal condition, and perhaps very wicked; but her dreadful diseases had been healed, and her more dreadful sins forgiven: therefore she loved thee so much, and her singular affection was rewarded with the first discovery of thy glorious person after thy rising from the dead. Thou knowest, Son of God, what reason we have to be affected with thy kindness to those who were once very wicked and very miserable.

Verse 10—14. "The backwardness of the disciples to believe the resurrection:"

They mourned and wept. Overwhelming sorrow would not suffer them to believe what they thought too good news to be true. Thou upbraidedst them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, after the miracles they had seen thee perform, and that glory which they beheld in thee, which made them confess thee to be the Christ, the Son of the living God; after thou hadst so plainly foretold thy resurrection; yet they believed not the ocular testimony of their fellow-disciples. Save us, Lord, from unbelief and hardness of heart. We adore, at the same time, thy divine wisdom in bringing good out of evil. This backwardness of thy disciples, at first, to believe thy  
resur-

resurrection, the reality of which they afterwards testified at the peril of their lives, is a remarkable confirmation of the truth of it.

Verse 15, 16. "Go ye into all the world," &c.

Blessed be thy name for the universal extent of this commission. Thou hast commanded the glad tidings of salvation to be preached to every human creature. They have come to our ears, Lord, and here we read, that if we believe, we shall be saved. Lord, give us that faith to which salvation is promised; that faith of thy gospel; that faith which worketh by love, and purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world.

Verse 17, 18. "And these signs shall follow them that believe."

We find these words verified by the event. Thy servant Paul writes of the Christians in his days, that to one was given by the Holy Ghost the working of miracles; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the gifts of healing; and he himself shook off a viper that had fastened upon his hand, and felt no harm. May we humbly ask, O Lord, why these miraculous gifts of thy Spirit ceased after the first ages, and are now no more to be seen? Thou knowest; but perhaps it is not needful that we should understand the reason of it. Only we beg, that thou wouldst give us much faith, and much holiness, and much of that love which will enable us, while on earth, to glorify our heavenly Father, and will continue in heaven, when all miraculous gifts shall cease. And as to gifts of every kind, Lord, grant us  
that



that portion by which thy name shall be most glorified; and let us never seek them from a desire of the praise or observation of men.

Verse 19, 20. "So then after the Lord had  
"spoken to them."

Lord, we believe, (help our unbelief,) that thou wast received up into heaven, and that thou sittest on the right hand of God. Thou hast the government of all things in heaven and earth. We acknowledge thy divine power, and desire to rejoice in it. Oh be the protector of these souls which we hope thou hast redeemed, and we shall need to fear no evil of any kind. Glory to thee for working with thy apostles, and confirming the word with signs. O be pleased to confirm it still with the signal fruits of holiness in the tempers and lives of multitudes in the present age.

## L U K E.

## C H A P. I.

Verse 1 to 5. "The preface."

**W**E bless thee, O gracious God, for exciting thy servants to record so many passages concerning the birth, life, and death of the Redeemer. O may thy Spirit be with us in reading them; may he open our understandings, and work upon our hearts, so as to make thy word profitable to us, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness; that we may be led thereby to Christ, and may know him, and be made to grow up unto him in all things.

Verse 5 to 26. "Of the promise made by the  
"angel to Zacharias."

Lord, teach us what thou wouldst have us to learn from this passage. We believe that the conception and birth of John was foretold by an angel to his Father Zacharias; and that in John was accomplished that prophecy concerning Elias coming before the Messiah. We observe likewise the character of Zacharias and Elizabeth, that they were both righteous before thee, walking in all thy commandments and ordinances blameless. O give us and ours thus to be disposed, and thus to walk. The angel said to him, "Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard." It seems, he had, like Abram and Hanna, prayed that he might  
have

have children, and that his wife might not be under the reproach of barrenness, which was very ignominious in that nation. And thou, at last, when, humanly speaking, the probability was less than ever, wast pleased to hear his prayer. Lord, deliver our souls from the curse of spiritual barrenness, and make us now at last to bring forth fruit unto God. Surely this petition is agreeable to thy will; and we beg thou wouldst grant it for the sake of thy beloved Son, whom thou hearest always, and who hath encouraged us to pray. May we not therefore, O merciful God, hope that thou sayest to us, though not by an angel, yet with as much certainty, "Fear not, your prayer is heard." Lord grant it for Christ's sake, by thy Spirit. We find some think his prayer was not (now at least) that he might have children, but that the Messia might come; and while he was earnestly praying for this great event, in which thy glory, and the salvation of mankind were so much concerned, thou conferredst this honour upon him and his family, that the forerunner of the Messia should be his son. Lord, give us first to be concerned for the interests of thy kingdom, and so all other things shall be added to us.

Verse 15. "Character of John."

Heavenly Father, this is to be truly great, to be great in thy sight. Give us no other greatness. How happy was the Baptist to be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. Alas! that some of us were so estranged from thee in our infancy and childhood, and that we did not pray to be filled with the Holy Ghost; for thou givest thy Spirit to them that ask him. Oh! blest the  
rising

rising generation with early grace for Christ's sake.

Verse 26 to 39. "Message by the angel to Mary."

Lord, give us the instructions thou wouldst have us to receive from this passage: The angel saluted Mary with the heavenly salutation, Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women. Surely, Lord, all they also are highly favoured, and thou art with them, and they are blessed, who have Christ formed in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. How rejoicing are these divine words that follow; "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." O glorious king of Zion, our souls worship and adore thee. Make us thy loyal and faithful subjects, and we shall be happy. In the 35th verse it is said, "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Oh heavenly Father, by thy blessed Spirit form in our souls the new creature, which is made after thy image. We bless thee for the perfect holiness of the human nature in the person of thy Son. The divine holiness is far above out of our sight: but the holiness of his humanity, though absolutely perfect, is more level to our understanding. Thou wast holy, Lord Jesus, in every respect; in thy birth, in thy heart, in thy life. Nothing in thee but what was perfectly holy. Oh make us holy.  
Lord,



Lord, make us to resemble thee. Though our bodies and souls have been sadly defiled with sin, thou can'st by thy Spirit make all things new. Oh make us holy; destroy every thing out of us which is not holy, be what it will. Do with us what thou pleasest, only make us holy. The angel's words are, "with God nothing shall be impossible." Lord Jesus, it is not impossible with thee to make us holy. Oh do it from this time, so shall we attain the end of our Being; and in spite of Satan be happy in glorifying and enjoying God for ever. Be it unto us according to the promises of thy gracious covenant, in which thou hast said, "I will write my laws in their hearts, and put them in their minds; and I will be unto them a God, and they shall be unto me a people." Behold thy servants; be it unto us according to thy word.

Verse 39 to 46. "Elizabeth's joy when Mary came to visit her."

Elizabeth was surprized at the honour done her when she, who was blessed among women, the mother of the Lord, came to her house. What shall we think, Lord Jesus, when thou vouchsafest to come into our hearts and to abide there for ever. For thou sayest, "If a man love me and keep my words, I will come unto him, and make my abode with him." Whence is this, Lord, to us? to us who are so unworthy, so guilty, and so vile. We can never enough admire thy condescension. Let the blessing of souls ready to perish be upon thee for ever and ever. Elizabeth farther says, "Blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." Oh give us this blessedness of  
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a firm faith in thy promises, that we may glorify thee, and may be blessed in waiting for a performance of the promise, and blessed in its accomplishment.

Verse 46 to 57. "Mary breaks forth into praise and thanksgiving."

When one saint rejoiceth and praiseth thee, it excites another to do the same: Elizabeth rejoiceth that the mother of her Lord should come to her. Mary rejoiceth that such distinguished honour should be conferred on her, to be the mother of the Lord. But surely they both had still great reason to rejoice on account of their spiritual relation to thee, and their interest in thy salvation. And so has every soul in whom thou art formed by the Holy Ghost; for when one said, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," thou answeredst, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." We would therefore adopt these words of the blessed Virgin. Let our souls also magnify the Lord; let our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour. For, we trust, he hath regarded our low and lost estate, when we were cast out in our loathsome sins, and had no eye to pity us; for behold henceforth through all the ages of eternity we shall be blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to us great things, and holy is his name. Lord, let us not be deceived by Satan or our own treacherous hearts. If, after all, we are yet in our sins; Oh! look with pity upon us now, compassionate Saviour, and deliver us: thy mercy is on them that fear thee, from generation to generation. Oh put thy fear into our hearts, that we may never depart from thee. Thou hast shewed strength

strength with thine arm; thou hast scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts; thou hast put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree; thou hast filled the hungry with good things, and the rich thou hast sent empty away. Oh make us to trust with a lively faith in thy almighty arm. Deliver us from every proud imagination. Make us truly humble. Give us our portion not among these mighty and rich, whom thou casteth down and sendeth empty away; but among the low and the hungry, whom thou exaltest and fillest with good. Glory to thee for helping thy servant Israel, in remembrance of thy mercy, as thou spakest to the fathers, to Abraham and his seed for ever. Oh make us true Israelites, pure in heart, and without guile, wrestling and prevailing with the condescending hearer of prayer. And give us Abraham's faith, that we may be blessed with him.

Verse 56 to 80. "The birth of John the Baptist, and the eucharistical and prophetic song of his father Zacharias."

What shall we learn from the name given by divine appointment, John, i. e. the grace, gift, or mercy of the Lord. Does not this refer to the riches of thy grace and mercy displayed in providing a Saviour for sinful and miserable men, whose way the Baptist came to prepare. Give us, O Lord, right views of this tender mercy, this free and glorious grace: And oh make us partakers of it. When Zacharias' mouth was opened, the first use he made of his speech was to praise thee. Oh let our tongues be employed in thy praise, and in speaking to the edification of immortal souls, and not in sinful or idle words. We desire

desire to join, as we are able, with thy saints in praising thee, Lord God of Israel, and blessing thy glorious name; because thou hast visited and redeemed thy people, and hast raised up for them a mighty Saviour, in the house of thy servant David, as thou spakest by the mouth of thy holy prophets, which have been since the world began; that thou wouldst save them from their enemies, and from the hand of all that hate them. Blessed be thy name for performing the mercy promised to the fathers, and for remembering thy holy covenant, the oath which thou swearest to Abraham. Lord! what ground of joy is it that all nations are now invited to partake of the blessings of Abraham, and of the sure mercies of David! May we and ours, O gracious God, whom thou hast mercifully acquainted with the gospel of salvation, find that we are indeed delivered by thee out of the hands of our spiritual enemies, and are enabled, with all thy true Israel, to serve thee without slavish fear, in holiness and righteousness before thee all the days of our life. Glory to thee for giving knowledge of salvation to thy people, by the remission of sins, through the tender mercy whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited them, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace. Oh give us and ours the knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins. Let thy tender mercy, oh our God, be exercised towards us. May the day-spring from on high visit our souls. May the sun of righteousness arise upon us with healing in his wings, to bring us out of the darkness and dreadful shadow of death, into his marvellous light; to guide our feet into the way of peace. Lord, grant it.



## CHAP. II.

Verse 1 to 21. "The birth of Jesus proclaimed  
"by the angel to the shepherds."

We see thy providence, heavenly Father, bringing Mary to Bethlehem, where the Messiah was to be born, that the scriptures might be fulfilled. But, oh, in what mean circumstances "she  
"brought forth her first born son and laid him  
"in a manger, because there was no room for  
"them in the inn." It seems he was born in a stable. Infinite God! how adorable are thy ways. Could it ever have entered into the heart of a creature to conceive such a thing? That God should become a human infant, and lye in a manger. We desire silently to adore this mystery, which no words can equal, oh incarnate God! Oh God become a weeping infant in a manger! What love is like thy love? What condescension like thine? Though there was no room for thee in the inn; we would now humbly entreat thee to make room for thyself in our hearts. Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell in them: see, they are ready for thee by thy grace. We would have every thing put out of them that is offensive to thee. Come, Lord, and make them thy habitation. Come and dwell with us; and we will think ourselves happier than kings. What signifies it to us, though we should have but a poor cottage to lodge in, and no money to pay for our entertainment, and no friends to receive us: What is all that to us, if thou, Lord Jesus, dwellest in our hearts. Thou hast given us abundance of outward accommodations; but whether we have such things or not, it is nothing, if we have thee in our hearts.

hearts. Oh deny us not this mercy. There are many at this day who have no room for thee. But thou hast been pleased to open our eyes, and we earnestly beg thou wouldst vouchsafe to come and make thy abode with us. Our hearts are indeed worthless and wicked, and filthy by nature; but thou canst make them good. Yea, Lord, thou canst make them temples and thrones to thyself, and adorn them with the graces of thy Spirit. Oh do not reject us. We are indeed utterly unworthy that thou shouldst come under our roof: But thou art meek and lowly, and dost not despise the prayer of the destitute. Come then, Lord; let us humbly plead thy own promise; "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." Be it unto us according to thy word.

The Redeemer's birth was first declared to poor, simple shepherds. To them the angel said, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Heavenly Father, give us to rejoice at the remembrance of our Redeemer's birth; for we trust he is indeed our Redeemer. Is it not thy will that we should rejoice? Give us then, by thy blessed Spirit, this holy joy: and let it not be extinguished by any worldly trouble whatsoever. To us is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord. Rejoice therefore, O heavens; be glad, all ye inhabitants of the earth; unto us a Son is born; unto us a Saviour is given; whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. He is come to be a Saviour to us, and to every one that will receive him. A multitude of angels make heavenly harmony on this occasion, praising

God, and saying, " Glory to God in the highest, " and on earth peace ; good will towards men." Have not mankind still greater reason to praise and rejoice ? O blind miserable men, why are you so insensible of your own unspeakable mercies ? while the angels proclaim them with joy. Oh why do you not all cry out with rapture, Glory to God in the highest ; Glory to the Prince of peace ; Glory to the holy Spirit, for the amazing good-will towards men !

Verse 21 to 39. " Jesus is circumcised and " presented in the temple. The testimonies " of Simeon and Anna."

Every thing was done according to the law. Thou wast circumcised ; shedding thy blood for sinners even in thy infancy. Thy mother offered for her purification the sacrifice appointed to be offered by the poor. Thou wast also presented to God in the temple, though thy heavenly Father had consecrated thee already, and thou hadst come into the world for this very end to do his will. But thus, thou wouldest fulfil all righteousness. Nothing was to be omitted. Glory be to thy name, O Jehovah our righteousness. How happy was aged Simeon. It is not said, that he was rich, or great, or honourable ; but that he was just and devout ; and waited for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him. Oh give us to be like him : To be sincerely pious ; to be universally and strictly just ; to have our peace and comfort in thee, O thou consolation of Israel : And to have the Holy Ghost upon us as our enlightener, sanctifier, and strengthner. How happy was that old saint, when after waiting for the divine promise, that he should not die till he had seen

Christ, he was led by the Spirit of God not only to see him, but to hold the infant Saviour in his arms. How happy was he also, that now there was nothing for the sake of which he would wish to have life prolonged. He blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." O grant us to live and die like Simeon. May we patiently wait as long as thou pleasest: and when thou hast fulfilled thy will concerning us here; Lord let thy servants depart in peace, rejoicing in our Saviour, and in the future prosperity of his kingdom, after we are in the dust. Let our bodies rest in the grave as in a bed, and our souls enter into that peace which is enjoyed by thy departed servants with thee.

In Simeon's words to Mary, beside the heart-piercing sorrow she was to suffer on account of what was to befall her son, we see a prediction of the offence which many of the Jewish nation would take at him, to whom the stone laid by Jehovah in Zion, would prove a stone of stumbling; but that many also would believe in him, and be raised thereby to as great heights of spiritual glory, as his adversaries would sink themselves into depths of guilt and wickedness by rejecting him. We see also a lively picture of the treatment he was to receive from sinners; that he was to be set up as a mark of their contradiction and opposition; and that men were to discover themselves, and the thoughts of their hearts to be revealed by their behaviour towards the Son of God. Lord, what wouldst thou have us to learn from these things? Let us not think it strange if we should suffer the greatest pain and sorrow for thy sake. Oh keep us from being offended in thee. Enlighten our minds to see all things about thee to be such as be-



come the Messiah, the Saviour, the only begotten Son of God. Give us to know that our hearts are made good by thy grace, because they have right dispositions towards thee, faith and love and trust and joy in thy blessed name. May we be helped to imitate the good example of Anna: she departed not from the temple, but served thee fourscore and four years with frequent prayers and fasting: May we continually worship and serve thee in spirit and in truth. May we pray without ceasing, and use religious fasting when in thy providence we are called to it. And let us not think a long life of this kind tedious. May we find more satisfaction in such a life than to dwell in the midst of all earthly pleasures without thee. It is sweet to serve thee in this dreary vale. But it will be far sweeter to serve thee in the new Jerusalem, where thy servants shall see thy face, and thy name shall be in their foreheads, and the glory of God and of the Lamb shall enlighten them, and they shall reign for ever and ever. It is transporting to think that great sinners, the chief of sinners among the Gentiles, shall there join with thy patriarchs and prophets, and all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem, in praising the Lamb that was slain. O Lord Jesus Christ, we trust in thee that thou wilt receive us among them.

Verse 39 to 52. "The life of Jesus in his  
"younger years."

O thou, in whose hands are the hearts of all, to turn them as the rivers of water whithersoever thou wilt, make young persons to resemble the Saviour in his youth. Oh give them to be strong by thy Spirit against sin, and in the way of their

duty; to be filled with wisdom, and to have the grace of God upon them. Give them to have their delight in the law of the Lord, and to meditate in it day and night; to hear and read thy word with attention, and seriously to inquire into the meaning of it, with dependance upon the Holy Ghost it's author; to make it their business to do the will of their heavenly Father; and agreeably to his command to be subject to their parents on earth, honouring and obeying them. And grant that as they increase in stature, they may increase in wisdom and in favour with God and man.

O eternal Son of God, we adore thee humbling thyself to take our nature not only in its maturity, but in its weak and tender state. Thus thou broughtest thyself as near as possible to our low condition, without sin. Thy humanity, though perfectly holy from the very first, yet grew in wisdom. Thou condescendest to hear the explainers of thy Father's law, and to ask them questions. Thou wast subject to thy parents. Oh give thy grace to young people to set thy divine example before them. And grant that their parents and teachers may be solicitous that they should follow it. May they be persuaded that this is the great, the essential part of right education, and that without it all others are vain or hurtful. Oh give all young persons a holy ambition to be like thee.

How early wast thou engaged in thy Father's work. "Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business." His law was within thy heart from the beginning. Thou camest into the world to do his will. Upon his work thou wast intent even in thy childhood; and the nearer thou camest to thy death, the more eager thou wast in pursuing it, if greater eagerness had been possible.

possible. Thou wouldst not suffer the persuasions of friends, the contradiction of enemies, the temptations of Satan, the dreadful view of a painful ignominious accursed death, to deter thee from finishing the glorious work of the salvation of souls, so precious in thy sight. Blessed be thy name for the unexampled strength and constancy of thy love.

## C H A P. III.

Verse 10 to 14. " The answers given by the  
" Baptist to his hearers, asking him what  
" they should do."

In these answers we see thy servant, who was sent to prepare the way before thee, inculcating the great duties of beneficence to the poor, and of justice and truth between man and man; duties which were afterwards much insisted on by thee also, who blamedst the Pharisees for neglecting these weightier matters of the law. Lord, give us always to see the importance and necessity of them, in the light of thy word, and may we sincerely perform them. We see also John did not forbid the publicans to continue in their profession; nor the soldiers in theirs; but only warned them against the sins which they were most in danger of, from their respective ways of life. Lord, help us to remember this, and to act accordingly; both in watching against the temptations to which our own way of life is most exposed, and in warning others.

And here we are taught, that where there is true repentance, the fruits of it will be, such as the opening of the hearts of the covetous to the poor; the oppressors will become just; the liars true and honest;

honest; and the violent and mutinous peaceable. Oh that thou wouldest work these glorious changes, by thy blessed Spirit, in those who hear thy Gospel now.

## C H A P IV.

Verse 16 to 31. "Jesus readeth in Nazareth  
"the prophecy of Isaiah concerning himself."

Lord, vouchsafe to do for us, all these great things which thy father has annointed thee by his Spirit to do for the poor, the broken hearted, the captives, the blind, the bruised. Thou knowest that what is wretched and miserable in these qualities we have had a very large share of; and as to what of them implies any degree of thy grace, we can say, Blessed be thy name, thou hast given some of us to see, in some small measure, our poverty and captivity and blindness. And we earnestly beg, for the sake of all that thou hast done for sinners, that thou wouldest give such a sight and sense of our misery, and such brokenness of heart, as thou seest necessary, and thinkest good, in order to our receiving all the blessings of salvation, at thy gracious hand. Glory to thee for what thou hast already done. O grant that now the acceptable year of the Lord may shine in our souls, and may be a Jubilee of continual gratitude and praise and zeal in the service of our glorious deliverer.

What shall we think, Lord, of what follows? They all wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of thy mouth; but they did not believe it in thee. They seem to have despised thee because of thy parentage. The language of  
their



their heart was, "Let us first see him perform  
"here in his own country, the miracles we have  
"heard he wrought in Capernaum." But thou  
wouldst not do any miracles among them because  
of their unbelief; except to save thyself out of  
their hands, because the hour of thy death was not  
yet come. Nor wast thou afraid to put them in  
mind, that the antient prophets were sent some-  
times not to their countrymen, but to strangers;  
who enjoyed the benefit of their miraculous  
powers, while those of their own nation were past  
by. What shall we learn from this? Lord, suf-  
fer us not to be offended at any thing in thee, or  
thy ways, which may appear mean in the eyes of  
the world. And let us not have less reverence for  
any of thy truths because we are daily conversant  
in them. Save us from relying on external privi-  
leges. And oh, give us that faith which thou  
still requiredst in those on whom thou wroughtest  
thy miracles. Give us faith to be healed in our  
souls.

Thou sufferedst the wrath of thine enemies to  
go a certain length, but no farther. They thrust  
thee out of the city, and led thee to the brow of  
a hill to cast thee down headlong. But thou,  
passing through the midst of them, disappointedst  
all their fury. Let us never be afraid of the wrath  
of man, when we are about thy work. May we  
be concerned to know thy will, and to do it from  
motives which thou approvedst; and commit all  
the rest to thee.

## C H A P. V.

Verse 1 to 12. " Jesus teacheth the people  
" out of a ship.—A miraculous draught of  
" fishes.—Peter, James and John forsake  
" all, and follow him."

Lord, teach us by thy Spirit. When people were desirous to hear the word of God, thou didst willingly preach it to them in any place; not confining thyself to the temple or synagogues, but sometimes from a mountain, sometimes in a house, sometimes as here in a ship. Lord, give us to love, to speak, and to hear thy word every where.

They who lent thee their ship for this purpose, were no losers even in a temporal view. They were abundantly rewarded for the little time they spent in waiting on thee.

They had toiled all night and taken nothing; so that it was merely to obey thee, that they let down their net any more; as there was not, they thought, the smallest probability of success. When Peter therefore saw such a multitude of fishes gathered into the net, as it were by thy command; having so lately heard thee declaring the glorious truths of the gospel with heavenly wisdom and authority, and now seeing this instance of thy power over the dumb creatures; he was struck with a sense of thy divine glory: and reflecting upon thy spotless purity and holiness, and his own guilt and vileness, he fell down at thy knees, and cried out, " Depart from me, for I  
" am a sinful man, O Lord!" He was surprized that so glorious a person should have any intercourse with him who was so unworthy. And this surprize seems to have been mixt with a cer-  
tain

tain dread of so holy a presence. But thou wast pleased in thy usual gracious manner to encourage him, saying, "Fear not;" and to let him know that his former unworthiness should not hinder his being one of thy servants whom thou wast to employ in letting down the net of the gospel to catch men. Which was remarkably fulfilled after thy ascension, when he and his fellow apostles were made instrumental in gaining at one time three thousand souls. In the mean time, what they had heard and seen made such impression on him and his partners, that so soon as they had brought their ship to land, they forsook all and followed thee.

Blessed Jesus, thou knowest we have reason with Peter to be overawed at thy holy presence, and to cry out, "Alas, we are sinful, O holy Lord." But we would not with Peter say, "Depart from us, because we are sinful." We would rather beseech and implore thy aid, O merciful Son of God, who art infinite in grace as well as in holiness, and who seest our sinfulness and misery, that thou wouldst graciously draw near to us and save us. Vile and unworthy as we are, thy blood can make us clean, and thy spirit can purify our hearts; and nothing else can do either. Come therefore, O gracious, almighty Saviour, to us who have been among the chief of sinners, and who are still, alas! sinful; O come and take away our sinfulness. And if thou hast already begun this blessed work in our hearts, promote it, Lord, every day; and perfect it. And never depart from us, nor bid us depart from thee.

We desire just now in heart and affection with Peter, to forsake all and to follow thee. Farewell world, with all that is called profitable, pleasant, or honourable under the sun. Welcome cross

cross of Christ. We will henceforth by grace follow our Saviour night and day. Lead on, heavenly conductor, through honour or dishonour, health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, through whatever paths thou seest good. Only do not thou leave us.

And, Lord, be with all whom thou hast called to the work of the ministry. May they, like Peter, be sensible of their sinfulness, and of thy amazing condescension in calling them to partake of thy grace, and to preach it to others. And when the Gospel net is let down, do thou, O Lord, bring souls into it; for thou alone canst do this.

Verse 17. " There were Pharisees, &c. sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, &c. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them."

Whether these Pharisees and teachers of the law came with an intention to find fault, or whether they were among those who believed in thee with a lower degree of faith; and whether they or the people attending were healed; one thing is evident, that thy power was present to heal some who were there. Oh that wherever thy Gospel is taught, thy power may be present to heal some precious souls.

## C H A P. VI.

Verse 12. " Jesus goes out into a mountain to pray, and continues all night in prayer, or in one of the places appointed for that exercise. See also CHAP. V. 16. He withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed."

From these and other instances in the Gospel history, it is evident that thou wast much given  
to



to prayer; and all thy disciples are called to pray without ceasing. What a glorious privilege, above all that the world has to give. What a perpetual source of peace, confidence, hope and joy. We thank thee, Lord Jesus, that ever thou wast pleased to teach us in any measure to pray; we had never known true comfort else: Blessed be the time that ever we were led to pour out our hearts to our heavenly Father, and to attend to the voice of his promises, and to taste the sweetness of prayer. But thou seest how we are hindered in it. O Father, give us thy holy Spirit, to help our infirmities, for Christ's sake, who hath engaged his word that thou wilt give him to them that ask thee. We are utterly unworthy; but the more unworthy the more needful; and thou hast said, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you; and I will put my Spirit within you." O graciously fulfil these promises, for which we now humbly inquire of thee. We will by thy grace believe and embrace them; and in dependance on thy Spirit will pray more and more. We know not what to pray for as we ought; but we hope he will make intercession in us. We hope he will deliver us from vain sinful thoughts, wanderings, affectation, unseasonable reflections, and all other hinderances. We hope he will thoroughly sanctify our whole souls and bodies, and give us a lively faith of the truths revealed in thy word; a deep reverence for thy presence; a true faith in thy beloved Son our mediator with thee; a right sense of our unworthiness, and guilt, and vileness; a clear sight of our spiritual wants, and of the blessings we ought to pray for, to ourselves and others; a continual hunger and thirst after these blessings; a zeal for thy glory, and for the advancement of thy kingdom,  
and

and the accomplishment of thy will; not to seek great things in this world, but to be content with daily bread; a heart full of love to all, and forgiveness to those who have wronged us; a sincere care to escape temptations, and to be delivered from the power of sin and Satan; and a cordial delight, like that of the blessed in heaven, in ascribing all dominion, and power, and glory to thy most excellent name for ever and ever.

We trust he will do all these things for us, and what else he knows we need. We are sure he is able; and thy promises make us sure of his willingness. We will therefore rest in it that he will be in us a spirit of grace and supplication, and a spirit of adoption, making us pour out our whole hearts with filial reverence to our compassionate condescending Father.

And, O blessed Redeemer, in whom alone we have access to the Father, by thy holy Spirit, when we have an opportunity of retiring into solitary places for prayer, we would remember with holy reverence thy high example. What an honour is it to be called to the imitation of it. O wash us in thy blood, and make us holy.

Verse 19. "There went virtue out of him,  
"and healed all who touched him."

They who sought to touch thee, did it with some degree of persuasion of thy power and willingness to heal them. Lord, we believe (help thou our unbelief) that thou art able and willing to heal the diseases of our souls. We trust in thee, and wait for the healing of them all, by the virtue that goes out of thy divine person.

Verse

Verse 20 to 26. " Blessings pronounced upon  
" the poor ; the hungry ; the mourners ;  
" the persecuted : and woes against the  
" rich, the full : those that laugh now, and  
" those of whom all men speak well."

Lord, give us rightly to understand thy words, the words of eternal life. Grant us poverty of Spirit ; and if external poverty shall come upon us in the way of our duty, let us not be discouraged ; may we hunger and thirst after righteousness : and though we should be ready to starve for want of daily bread, let our souls feed on thy promises. Give us to weep for our own sins, and for the sins and miseries of others, and for the contempt poured upon thy dying love. And if our afflictions should be such as may draw tears from us without sin, may these tears be poured out to thee, and may we never indulge grief to excess, when thou hast promised consolation, and canst make all things work together for good. And if we shall be hated, and separated, and reproached, and have our name cast out as evil, for thy sake ; may we rejoice, and leap for joy. On the other hand, Lord save us from those dreadful woes : a blessing from thee is enough to fill the heart of a poor, starving, weeping, hated, despised creature, with gladness ; but a woe is enough to destroy all the riches, and fulness, and mirth, and honour of this world, and to turn them into misery. Lord, save us from being rich in worldly wealth, and destitute of thy grace ; from being satisfied with the enjoyments of this life ; from living in thoughtless gaiety and mirth, unconcerned about thy glory and about our own and our neighbours salvation ; and from pleasing  
ourselves

ourselves with a good name among men while we are not approved by thee.

## C H A P. VII.

Verse 11 to 17. "The widow of Nain's son raised from the dead."

We adore this instance of thy compassion to a poor widow, in which, as in every thing, thou resemblest thy Father. O teach all widows and fatherless and afflicted persons of every kind to put their trust in thee; and to take comfort when they think that though their condition may be forgotten or neglected by men, thou regardest it. And make us chearfully to embrace every opportunity of helping or comforting such. When thou hadst raised the dead to life, thou didst not take him along with thee, but delivered him to his mother. May we ever look on relative duties as a very acceptable part of thy service. And O merciful Saviour, who hadst pity on this sorrowful woman, and didst restore her child to temporal life; grant spiritual life to the souls of our children for thy mercies sake.

Verse 29, 30. "The publicans justified God:  
"The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the  
"council of God against themselves."

Give us, Lord, with these true penitents baptized by John, humbly to approve thy counsel in the method of salvation, and save us from the wicked dispositions of the Pharisees, which made them reject it.



•Verse 36 to 50. “ The woman that washed  
“ our Lord’s feet with tears.”

Thou knowest we are like this woman in the multitude and greatness of our sins. Oh make us like her in being saved by thee. Blessed be thy name, thou rejectest not the greatest sinners. Yea, it plainly appears from this passage, that thou canst make them the greatest saints. And that there is nothing to hinder their reception; but if they believe in thee, they shall be saved.

Lord, give us the faith that this woman had, which respected not the healing of any bodily disease, but the pardon of her sins, and the salvation of her soul. She had a high esteem of thee, and thought nothing too worthy for thy entertainment. She was ashamed and afraid because of her vileness to approach thy sacred person; yet she could not stay away; but, like the publican, who dared not to lift up his eyes to heaven, she stood behind thee: and finding that thou sufferedst her to come near, this encouragement made her weep plentifully, so that she bathed thy feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head: And being now convinced more and more of thy mercy, her gratitude emboldened her to kiss thy feet, which, in token of her great reverence mixt with this love, she also anointed with the ointment.

How encouraging is it to sinners like us, to hear thy vindication of her, and thy declaration of her pardon and acceptance. We bless thee, if ever thou hast been pleased to look upon any of us in our vile and loathsome condition, and to draw our hearts towards thee, and affect us with an apprehension of thy astonishing goodness. O

grant that if our faith has not yet been right, it may be so now. Give us, O merciful Jesus, now to believe in thee, as this woman did. Thou just now sufferest us to approach thee with this request. Thou givest us this new opportunity, after we have long abused thy patience. And thou givest us in reading thy word this encouraging example. Lord, we would wash thy feet with our tears. We would humbly adore and love thee with all our heart, with all our strength, with all our mind. What shall we do for thy glory? Lord, direct and strengthen us.

## C H A P. IX.

Verse 23. "The necessity of taking up the  
"cross daily."

Alas! how little do these words seem to be minded by many who call themselves thy disciples! Let us not the less remember and practise them. Lord, give us grace to deny ourselves, to the utmost extent, and in the highest sense thou wouldst have us to understand it: and oh be pleased to teach us, and let us not think any day is to pass without the cross. May we lay our account with it, and take up our cross daily, and follow thee. Why should we be discouraged when the time is so short? One hour of heaven will make amends for all; beside the present inexpressible satisfaction of suffering for thy sake.

Verse 48. "He that is least among you all,  
"the same shall be great."

Save us from worldly ambition. May all our  
ambition be to be among thy children, the least  
M 2 of

of whom has more true greatness just now, than all the children of the wicked one put together; and will, in a very short time, reign with thee in heaven.

Verse 51 to 56. "The Samaritans would not receive our Lord."

Here, first, we see thee rejected and persecuted every where by a wicked world. The Jews sought to kill thee: the Samaritans would not receive thee, because thou wast going to Jerusalem. In the next place, we see these Samaritans, who worshipped they knew not what, and opposed the worshipping of God at Jerusalem, dreadfully punishing themselves by refusing to receive thee. Lastly, thy disciples, who proposed to bring down fire from heaven upon them, were rebuked by thee with these remarkable words: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Glory to thee, that this was the merciful design of thy coming. Oh then save the life of our souls, and help us to remember these words of thine, and to act agreeably to them in all cases to which they ought to be applied. And may we have the same mind that was in thee, inclining us in the whole of our conduct to do all the good we can to all men, and hurt to none, either in soul or body.

Verse 61, 62. "No man putting his hand to the plough," &c.

Have we not professed to renounce this evil world, Lord, and to follow thee? Let us not then

then have any hankering after it, like those who want to bid farewell to their friends, whom they unwillingly leave. Henceforth may we have no thought of it, but with joy, that thy grace hath wrought our escape; never once looking back, but keeping our eyes upon thee, and upon the work to which thou callest us.

## C H A P. X.

Verse 17 to 21. "Rather rejoice because your  
"names are written in heaven."

Were we endowed with a power of working miracles, we should be ready to rejoice: yet thou hast here plainly taught us, we have greater reason to rejoice if our names be written in heaven. How happy were these disciples, who had it from thy own mouth, that their names were written in heaven! Lord, give us to know, that our names are written in heaven, (to the praise of thy free grace,) from the testimony of thy blessed word. We are there informed, that neither the unrighteous, nor adulterers, nor fornicators, nor the unclean, nor the lascivious, nor the effeminate, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor revilers, nor extortioners, nor idolaters, nor such as are guilty of witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murder, drunkenness, revelling, and such like, can inherit the kingdom of God: and that the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and all liars, and all who will not cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, that causeth them to offend, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.



On the other hand, that all who believe in thy name, who repent, who love thee, who are sanctified, who do the will of thy Father, who follow thee, who are faithful unto death, who overcome, shall be saved.

Oh blessed Redeemer, deliver us from all the former hateful tempers, and give us by thy holy Spirit that genuine faith in thee, that repentance, love, holiness; and give us to know, that thou hast bestowed them upon us, that so we may have cause continually to rejoice.

Verse 25 to 37. "The compassionate Samaritan."

This Jewish teacher seems to have proposed his question rather to tempt thee, than with a view to his own edification. With what wisdom and justice didst thou rebuke that self justifying, narrow, unmerciful spirit, which thou sawest prevailing in him. Lord, save us from such a temper. Give us the Christian temper. Let us not be like the priest or the Levite; but like the Samaritan, who had compassion on the wounded man, and bound up his wounds, and provided lodging and entertainment for him: and give us the rather to imitate this amiable example, because it is so like thine, in pitying perishing souls. Lord Jesus, our souls were by sin and Satan robbed and stripped naked, and wounded, and left half dead. The virtue and wisdom of men, when they saw us, passed by on the other side: and likewise the law came and looked on us, and passed by on the other side: but when thou sawest us, thou hadst compassion upon us, and didst bind up our wounds, and take care of us. What shall we render to thee?

Thou

Thou sayest, concerning the great commandments of the law, "This do, and thou shalt live." Lord, thou knowest we cannot fulfil thy just and righteous law. We are condemned by it in numberless instances; but thou hast perfectly fulfilled it. O let us be justified by thy blood and thy righteousness; and put thy blessed Spirit within us, and cause us to fulfil thy law, as far as it is possible it can be fulfilled in this state of imperfection, and hasten our perfect conformity to it in glory.

Verse 38 to 42. "Mary and Martha."

Both these persons loved thee, and were beloved by thee; but Martha was cumbered about much serving. Being to entertain thee and thy disciples in her house, she was thrown into too great anxiety; and this anxiety made her uneasy to see her sister sitting at thy feet, hearing thy words, and giving her no help: for Mary's attention was ingrossed by the gracious words that proceeded out of thy mouth; yet her behaviour was more approved by thee than the other. Hence we learn, that it is not thy pleasure, that thy disciples should be cumbered, and careful, and troubled about many things, even in ministering to thee; and that with a composed mind to attend to thy word, in order to do it, is a more acceptable expression of respect, than Martha's anxious entertainment was. And, lastly, that it is better for themselves. It is the one thing needful, the good part which shall not be taken away from us. Blessed be thy name for determining us, we hope, to choose this good part. We long sought rest in many things; but we never found it till we sought it in thy word.

M 4

Here

Here we sit at thy feet, Oh divine Teacher, with delight and profit. All the wisest men cannot teach us as thou canst. Thy words are the words of eternal life ; sweeter than rest to the weary, or murmuring streams to the thirsty. We sit under thy shadow with delight, and find thy fruit sweet to our taste. Here we learn that wisdom which guides us comfortably through life, makes death desirable, and eternity lovely and glorious.

## C H A P. XI.

Verse 5 to 13. "Encouragement to prayer."

Heavenly Father, we join with all the disciples of thy Son in praying that thy name may be hallowed, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread : and forgive us our sins ; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us : and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Thou seest what encouragement is given us to pray to thee by thy beloved Son, in whom thou art well pleased, and whom thou hast commanded us to hear. How he sheweth us, that importunity will prevail, even where friendship will not ; and adds, " I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." And how he appeals to paternal affection, whether any of us that is a father, will give a stone to our child when he asks bread ; adding, " If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how

“ how much more shall the heavenly Father give  
 “ the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ? ” Thou  
 knowest that these are the words of thy only be-  
 gotten Son, whom thou hast sent into the world  
 to save sinners, and whom thou commandest them  
 to believe and obey. They assure us, thou  
 wilt not be offended, when we plead in the most  
 earnest and importunate manner for the gift of  
 thy Holy Spirit, and that no time can be unsea-  
 sonable. Lord, remember these words of thy  
 Son. We cannot take a denial ; for if we obtain  
 not thy Spirit, we must perish ; but if we get  
 this inestimable gift, we shall be for ever blessed.  
 Oh merciful Father, deny us not thy Holy Spi-  
 rit. If thou hearest us not this day, we must re-  
 peat our earnest cries to-morrow, and next day,  
 and every day, till we be heard, while thou givest  
 us power to speak or think. Oh Father, hear  
 us for Christ's sake : we trust thou wilt.

Verse 41. “ Rather give alms,” &c.

Hence we learn, that impurity of heart is the  
 greatest impurity ; and that avarice and cruelty  
 are eminent parts of this inward uncleanness.  
 Lord, save us from these abominable dispositions  
 which prevailed in the Pharisees. May we cheer-  
 fully give alms of such things as we have, and  
 thankfully use what remains agreeably to thy  
 will, being sanctified to us by thy word and  
 prayer.

Verse 44. “ As graves that appear not,” &c.

Lord, give us truth and integrity, to be what  
 we appear, that men may not be deceived in us ;  
 and give us real Christian goodness, which, in-  
 stead



stead of harm, will rather do unexpected service to those who fall in its way.

## C H A P. XII.

Verse 13 to 21. "About dividing an inheritance. The parable of the rich man, who said, Soul, take thine ease, &c."

Thou wouldst not take to thyself the office of a judge or divider, or any other to which thou wast not called by thy father; who sent thee not to divide earthly inheritances, amongst men who often contend about them from a principle of covetousness; but to deliver them from covetousness itself, and to teach them to seek an inheritance in heaven. Lord, give us to take heed and beware of covetousness, and firmly to believe that neither the happiness of a man's soul, nor his comfort in a present life, consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And may we profit by a serious consideration of the parable which thou spakest on this occasion. The man was rich and prosperous; yet he was full of care: And the object of this care was how to bestow his fruits. When this care should be over, he vainly promised himself ease and satisfaction for many years. But God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" Lord, be merciful to those who have great estates, that they may not have it for their chief concern what they shall do to bestow their fruits; but may rather inquire what they shall do to be saved. Let them not think it is the right way to bestow their fruits, to hoard them up; but

but may they do good with them; may they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. Let them not think the wealth of this world can give rest to their immortal souls, which can never be happy but in thee. Let them not deceive themselves with the expectation of long life, when this very night their souls may be required of them; but oh let it be their great care to be rich towards God. And give us, Lord Jesus, an interest in thy unsearchable riches, and then we shall have good reason to say to our souls; "Soul, thou hast inexhaustible treasures laid up for all the years of Eternity. Take thy rest, eat of the hidden manna; drink of the pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb; and rejoice in the Lord always." Thus we may pass this life, and when thou sendest thine angels to take away our souls, we shall be still happier. Glory to thy name.

Verse 32 to 34. "Fear not, little flock,  
" &c."

Thou art the good shepherd, who gavest thy life for the sheep. May we be among thy little flock whom thou knowest, and who know thee, and hear thy voice, and follow thee, and will not follow a stranger. Be thou our shepherd, Lord Jesus, and we shall want nothing, and shall need fear no evil: for it is thy Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom. Adored be his free sovereign grace! Thou sayest, "Sell that you have and give alms." Be pleased graciously to teach us in what manner we are to understand these words, and how to apply them to ourselves. Whatever we have, Lord, is at thy disposal. Blessed be thy

thy name, we hope thou hast given us to have our treasure and our heart in heaven. Lord, put this beyond all doubt.

Verse 35 to 40. " Watchfulness and readiness  
" for Christ's coming."

May we stand ready to receive our heavenly Lord at whatever hour he shall come. When thou knockest, by a fit of sickness, or by some unforeseen accident, may we " open to thee immediately." Thou hast said, " Blessed are those " servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall " find watching: Verily I say unto you, that he " shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to " meat, and will come forth and serve them." Oh give us the grace of watchfulness, to which so high and glorious promises are made; promises too high to be fully comprehended in this life. May we beware of sloth and security. May we watch against our spiritual enemies. May we wait for thy second coming, or for thy calling us home to thee. May we wait for these events with the desire of those who watch for the morning, and with a vigilance suitable to the suddenness and unexpectedness of them, as to the particular time. For thou comest at an hour when we think not.

Verse 41 to 48. " The faithful and wise  
" stewards.

Lord, make all who have the care of precious souls, faithful and wise stewards. Grant, particularly, that all pastors and instructors of youth, and heads of families, may be such. May they, in their several stations, feed the souls committed to their care with the pure word of God; rightly divid-

ing it, and giving every one his portion of meat, and in due season. Lord, give us to be found by thee, when thou comest, so doing. And may we be animated in this course by the hope of thy high approbation. But save us from resembling the wicked servant, who saith in his heart, " My Lord delayeth his coming, and begins to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken." As we would not share in the dreadful punishment, of being cut off and having our portion with the unbelievers; keep us at the utmost distance from his crimes; from every thing like lording it over thy heritage; every degree of intemperance; every thing indecent. And the rather, because we cannot plead ignorance of our Lord's will in these things.

Verse 49, 50. " I came to send fire on the earth. I have a baptism to be baptized with, &c.

Let us not think it strange that the fire of division, and persecution, was kindled on the earth by thy Gospel; when we consider the wickedness of unconverted souls, the spite and rage of Satan, and the indispensable obligation which thy saints find themselves under, to forsake their nearest relatives rather than forsake thee. But neither the flame that christianity was to raise in the world, nor thy own dreadful sufferings, discouraged thee from going on in thy glorious work of saving immortal souls. For this thou wast determined to be baptized with the baptism of thy blood, and wast straitned till it was accomplished. Eternal praise to the unshaken constancy and unconquerable height of thy redeeming love.

Verse



Verse 57. "Why of yourselves judge ye not  
" what is right."

Thou canst appeal to the judgment which all men are able even of themselves to give of what is just and right. Their consciences are ready to bear testimony for thee, if they would hear them. Lord, awaken all the opposers of thy Gospel to attend to these inward admonitions, before it be too late.

### C H A P. XIII.

Verse 1 to 10. "The Galileans killed by Pilate while they were sacrificing.—The  
" eighteen on whom the Tower of Siloam  
" fell.—And the parable of the fig-tree."

Hence we learn, that though thou hast often testified thy displeasure against the wickedness of men by extraordinary judgments, as in the case of the old world, and Sodom, and the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness; yet are we not warranted from this to conclude that all who suffer uncommon calamities, or are suddenly destroyed, are greater sinners than their neighbours. Many of the Jews, it would seem, were as great or greater sinners than those who were so suddenly cut off; and were therefore warned by thee, that, except they repented, they should all perish in like manner; which was sadly accomplished at the siege of Jerusalem. Keep us, Lord, when we see any cut off by an unexpected stroke, from judging that this befalls them because they are greater sinners than others. If we know them not to be guilty by their visible fruits, let us not dare to judge it by  
what

what they suffer in this life. But if they have been guilty of heaven-daring crimes before the world ; if there appears an evident resemblance betwixt their crimes and their punishment ; What shall we think in such a case ? Lord, teach us. We look to thee to guide us. Grant that we may never lean to harsh or rash judging ; but may be ready to judge and condemn ourselves, as we have good reason to do. Let us not think ill of any, merely because they meet with uncommon calamities ; many of thy dear Saints having met with these ; nor because they are suddenly cut off by some unexpected disaster. And when we see men who are openly wicked, meeting with these things, let us not think that even they are greater sinners than others who are spared. But may we conclude that all transgressors of thy law must, except they repent, perish in a similar way, which, upon the whole, will be as dreadful. Lord, help us to hearken to the parable of the fig-tree. We have long been spared, though, if not barren yet very unfruitful ; year after year we have been spared. May we not hope, O Lord Jesus, that thou hast interceded for our preservation. If we continue barren, the time of cutting down must soon come, now. Oh make us to bring forth fruit. Lord, 'tis from thee alone we can derive sap and nourishment. We beseech thee unite us to thee. Oh cause us to bring forth fruit ; and purify us, that we may bring forth more fruit.

Verse 11 to 17. " The woman that was bowed  
" together eighteen years."

Lord, thou knowest the diseases of our souls, by which we have been bowed together, many of us, more than twice that time. Blest be thy name for  
any

any degree of healing or liberty. Oh look upon us with pity, and call us to thee and say, "Man, woman, thou art loosed from thy disease:" Lay thy hands on us, and immediately we shall be made straight, and shall glorify thee. Do it now, Lord; just now; thou who wouldst not send away the diseased without healing them on the sabbath. O compassionate Saviour, heal our souls; and deliver them from every bond of Satan from this day forth.

Verse 23 to 30. "The Lord's answer to that question, Are there few that be saved?"

Thy answer does not satisfy curiosity, but it directs conscience. Let us not meddle with things that are too high for us, and which we are not called to inquire into; but let our great concern be, that we, and all in whom we have any interest, or of whom we have any knowledge, may obtain thy Salvation. And those whom we can no otherwise serve in this great work, may we pray for them. Lord, give us by thy Spirit to strive as in an agony to enter in at the strait gate. Let us not be among those who now seek carelessly and by fits to enter in, and who shall seek in vain after the door is shut. But may we seek with that earnestness, importunity, and perseverance, to which thou hast graciously promised success. Let us not, O our Saviour, think it enough that we eat and drink in thy presence, and enjoy thy teachings; but save us from working iniquity. O let no iniquity have dominion over us, or be regarded in our hearts. Son of God, set us free from it, and make us workers of righteousness. It seems it will be a part of the punishment of the wicked to see thy saints in thy kingdom, and themselves thrust

thrust out by their unbelief and impenitence ; and that some who appeared to be first in their external privileges and profession, shall be last as to their admission into heaven ; while many who seemed to be last, shall come as it were, from a great distance, and be readily admitted, and highly advanced there. Lord, help us rightly to improve these truths. Deliver us from all these wicked dispositions that hinder'd the Pharisees and the other unbelieving Jews from entering into thy kingdom. We would come to thee (Lord, help us) as poor sinners of the Gentiles ; blind, ignorant, guilty, polluted, diseased, enslaved, bound by sin and Satan. Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon us.

Verse 31 to 35. “ Depart hence, for Herod  
“ will kill thee.”

When we compare this passage with thy answer to thy disciples on another occasion, when they said, “ Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou to Judea again ;” and to Peter, when he would have dissuaded thee from suffering ; we see that thou wouldst not be hinder'd either by the entreaties of dearest friends, or the threats of powerful, cunning, and malicious foes, from prosecuting thy glorious work ; and that thou knewest the time in which it was to be finished, which it was not in the power of earth or hell to prevent. We see thou didst not fear what the Pharisees and Herod both could do against thee ; though they might be provoked by thy publishing, on this and other occasions, the baseness and falshood of their hearts. To cast out devils, and to do cures, was to be thy compassionate and beneficent employment, till the time

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should



should come of thy being perfected through thy last sufferings, which it was determined should be at Jerusalem, where thy servants the prophets had formerly suffered.

Lord, give us grace rightly to improve all these things. Give us to know the work which thou wouldst have us to do, and the proper season of it; and with diligence and steadiness to pursue it, unmoved by the fear of man. And save us from the sin and punishment of wicked Jerusalem. When thou callest, we would come to thee and hide ourselves under thy wings. O receive us and ours under thy wings, where only we shall be safe.

#### C H A P. XIV.

Verse 1 to 6. " They watched Jesus on the sabbath. He heals a man that had the dropfy."

Tho' they maliciously watched thee, they could not hinder thee in thy unwearied and undiscouraged course of doing good. Thou healedst all kind of bodily diseases, and thou canst heal all the diseases of the soul. That of the dropfy resembles the dreadful condition of a soul, in which the lusts of the flesh and of the mind continually thirst for gratification, and by indulgence grow more violent. Lord Jesus, deliver us from them. O heal our diseased souls. Blest be thy name for begun deliverance in any of us; when, when shall it be completed!

Verse 7 to 11. " Against self exaltation."

Thy discourse was always edifying. Lord, teach us to imitate thee. Give us also carefully to observe

serve these words of thine directed to those who chose out the chief places. Give us to beware of self exaltation, and to be ready to humble ourselves on all occasions.

Verse 12 to 14. "To make a feast for the poor, rather than for friends and kinsmen and rich neighbours."

Lord, teach us the true meaning of these words. In matters of hospitality and generosity (as it is called) let us not act from vanity, or from a desire of a recompence in this world. But may we do good to those who stand in greatest need, and who cannot recompence us, in the firm belief of what thou hast here said, that we shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Verse 15. "The saying of one that sat at meat with our Lord."

May we learn from what this man spoke, so seasonably, of the blessedness of those that eat bread in the kingdom of God, to be always ready to promote edifying conversation. Lord, give us both the inclination and ability.

Verse 16 to 24. "The parable of the great supper. See Matt. 22."

Praise to thy name for providing that great feast of the blessings of salvation to all people; and sending thy servants to invite them to come, for that all things are now ready. Alas that so great salvation, purchased by such a price, and offered with such amazing condescension, should by multitudes be despised! Alas that the concerns and

comforts of this life (lawful in a certain degree) should so ingross their affections, that they have no inclination to that spiritual feast, but desire to be excused. How provoking this contempt! But, blessed be thy name, when those who were first bidden, and were most indebted to thee for the good things of a present life, refused to come; thou sentest an invitation to the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. When the proud Pharisees rejected thy gospel, thou sentest it to the poor, outcast Gentiles. And, glory to thee, after all that have embraced it, there is room for more. Yet there is room, heavenly Father, in thy mercy; yet there is room in the merits of thy Son; yet there is room in the power of thy Spirit; yet there is room in heaven: all praise to thee! And therefore thou hast ordered thy servants to go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in. Oh be with all whom thou sendest to preach thy Gospel. May they frankly invite the last and worst of mankind. And may they be directed by thy Spirit to such arguments as he will make effectual to compel sinners to come in. Glory to thee, thy house must and shall be filled. Oh hasten the filling of it. How awful is the doom of gospel despisers, though it be nothing but their own choice, never to taste of thy supper! We deserve not, thou knowest, to taste of it. But we are among the poor, the halt, and the blind, whom thou still inviteest; and what shall we say? since thou art pleased to invite us, we would with our whole heart accept the gracious invitation, and bless and praise thee for it.

Verse 25 to 33. The necessity of self-denial,  
“ and bearing the cross, and forsaking all  
“ for Christ.”

Let us not rashly and thoughtlessly inlist among thy followers, as too many do. May we seriously consider and weigh the terms. Thou hast said, “ If any man come to me, and hate not his  
“ father and mother, and wife, and children, yea  
“ and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.  
“ And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and  
“ come after me, cannot be my disciple. And  
“ whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all  
“ that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” We acknowledge, Lord, the reasonableness of all this. It is most just that we should have no love to our friends or nearest relatives, in comparison of our love to thee the infinite God, our Maker and Saviour and Sanctifier. Nor can we love them rightly, till we love them with a heart in which thy love is supreme. It is most just that we should bear our cross, and be ready by thy grace for contempt, persecution and death in following thee, the glorious God. And besides, thou hast assured us that this course leads to eternal life and glory. It is most just that we should forsake all that we have for thee, because it is all of thy giving; and surely thy gifts are not to be compared with thyself. And thou hast also promised abundantly to make up our loss, to give us a hundred fold even in this life, and life eternal in heaven. We would therefore deliberately resolve to follow thee in the way of self-denial, and the cross, and forsaking all that we have. Lord, help us. It is easy to speak; but when the hour of trial comes, Lord be with us then.



## CHAP. XV.

“ The parable of the lost sheep and the lost  
“ piece of silver.”

Lord Jesus, we would draw near with the publicans and sinners to hear thee. The Pharisees murmured saying, “ this man receiveth sinners “ and eateth with them.” But to great sinners, such as we are, this is matter of unspeakable consolation, especially, when we find thee here so expressly asserting that the repentance of a lost soul is an event most acceptable to thy Father; and repeating and illustrating this joyful truth by no less than three parables, spoken before the Pharisees, for the encouragement of the greatest sinners to come to thee.

Lord Jesus, give us true repentance, for it is thy gift. Our souls are like lost sheep; and thou hast come to seek that which was lost. Didst thou not long seek us, Lord? And didst thou not find us at last; and carry our souls home to thy Father? Yea, when long without food and worried by the beasts of prey, they were not able to go, thou carriedst them on thy shoulders. But if it was so, alas! some of us have wandered away and lost ourselves again. O seek and find us. O give us true repentance in the full extent of it. Let not our Lord be angry when we plead for our lives. Take a divine joy in saving these souls. Say to thy saints and angels in heaven, This night “ rejoice with me, for I have found this and that “ soul which was doubly lost.” Immortal souls are very precious in thy sight. O let our Saviour have infinitely more joy in the salvation of us and ours, than the men of this world have in finding treasures,

treasures, which they had lost. And deliver us, O Lord, from the envious disposition of the Pharisees. May we rejoice in the conversion of sinners, the greatest sinners, and in their advancement to be the most eminent saints; like those loving spirits of heaven, who rejoice when the basest and vilest of men are raised to an equality with themselves.

Verse 11. "The parable of the prodigal."

Heavenly Father, we will confess our own folly and wretchedness, and thy adorable mercy. We were like the prodigal son, who, not content with the happiness of his father's house, took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living. Some of us wasted and abused our health, and youth, and leisure, and attention, and memory, and whatever other talents and opportunities thou gavest us, and well nigh ruined both our souls and bodies. Our condition was as poor and wretched as his who was sent into the fields to feed swine, and would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him. But didst not thou, oh compassionate Saviour, bring us to ourselves, and make us sensible that there was bread enough in our Father's house, and to spare, while we perished with hunger? Didst thou not reveal thy Father to us, as our Father, and determine us to go to him, and say, "Father, we have sinned against heaven and before thee, and are no more worthy to be called thy sons; make us as thy hired servants?" And before we had done these things, while we were yet a great way off, didst not thou, oh heavenly Father, pity us, and run to meet us? Didst thou not receive us

into thy house, and clothe us with the best robe of thy Son's righteousness, and give us the earnest of thy Spirit in our hearts, crying, "Abba Father?" If it has been so with us, blessed be thy name for evermore. Yea, it will be blessed, and ought to be blessed, though we should perish; but we have peculiar reason to do it if thou hast dealt thus with us. But if we have been deceiving ourselves; if we are yet feeding on husks, and beside ourselves; oh Father, Father, let our wretchedness move thy pity. In every lucid interval we would cry to thee, "Father, we have sinned against heaven and before thee, and are no more worthy to be called thy sons; make us as any of thy hired servants, the meanest and the foremost toiled of them all. Only do not banish us from thy house, oh our Father. What profit is there in our blood when we go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? Hear, O our Father, and have mercy upon us for Christ's sake." We hope thou wilt: for though indeed we do not deserve it, thou knowest he deserves all; and he hath put these words in our mouths; he hath furnished us with these arguments in this gracious parable.

We rejoice also to find in the sequel, that when the elder son murmured that the returning prodigal had been better treated than him, thou didst patiently bear this unkind reflection, and overcamest his evil with good, saying, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." This also is very encouraging: Glory to thee for the

the exceeding riches of thy grace, displayed in thy kindness towards sinners through Christ Jesus.

## C H A P. XVI.

Verse 1 to 12. "The unjust steward."

Thou thyself hast directed us what improvement to make of this parable. Are the children of this world so wise in improving their wealth and opportunities, and providing for futurity? Save us, Lord, from being thoughtless and negligent about heaven, and the means of grace, and the day of salvation, and the eternal state of our souls. Oh make us wise with respect to these great and necessary things; and give us to make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when we fail, Thou, O Lord Jesus, mayst receive us into those everlasting habitations, which thou art preparing; and mayest send thy friendly angels to carry our souls thither, who perhaps will be attended with some of thy saints, to whom we have been helped to do any good. Oh what a joyful day will that be! Blessed be thy free grace.

Lord, grant we may be faithful in disposing of whatever thou hast given us, according to thy will. Save us from being careless how we bestow it, because it is little. But may we remember thy words: "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." Lord, give us not the riches of this world, but give us true riches; and give us to be faithful to thee as stewards, as servants, in the perishing things of this life; in the hope of that gracious promised



promised reward in the possessions of eternity purchased and made sure by thy blood.

Verse 14, 15. "Our Lord's answer to the covetous Pharisees who derided him."

It is no wonder worldly minds should deride thy disciples, when they dared to deride thee. Lord, save us from the wickedness of those Pharisees, who justified themselves before men, but had hearts not right towards God. May we be more careful to have thy approbation than that of men; and let us not in our judgment be guided by the esteem of men, seeing thou hast declared, "That what is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God."

Verse 19 to 31. "The rich man and Lazarus."

Lord, teach us the lessons thou wouldst have us to learn from this description. Here we see the reality of a future state of unspeakable happiness or misery; and that this happiness or misery begins immediately after death: for the rich man died, and lift up his eyes in hell, being in torments. Lazarus died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.—We see also the misery of wicked men amidst the greatest riches and pleasures of this life. What did it avail this rich man to be clothed in purple and fine linnen; to fare sumptuously every day for a few years; and then to go to the torments of hell?—And the happiness of thy saints amidst poverty, pain, loathsome diseases, extreme contempt. It is in this life only they have these evil things, which are soon over, and are succeeded with the everlasting consolations of heaven.—That the wicked in hell  
may

may seek an alleviation of their misery, but it will be in vain.—That there is an unpassable gulf betwixt heaven and hell.—That the damned may desire that their relations should not come into the place of torment.—And that if men will not hearken to thy written word, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

These truths, Lord, we see in this remarkable description. Whatever else thou wouldest have us to learn from it, be pleased graciously to make us know. And oh give us dispositions of heart suitable to what we have learned, and to act accordingly. Save us from living in pleasure and delicacy, and from being unmerciful to the poor; or unmindful of them. And oh make us like Lazarus in grace, and then we shall not need to be uneasy, though thou shouldst see fit to make us like him in other respects. We shall have no cause of complaint or discouragement at all. Yea, Lord, thou canst by thy holy Spirit fill us with such a joyful hope of soon being taken to heaven, as will raise us above all temporal evils whatsoever.

## C H A P. XVII.

Verse 3, 4. "Duty to a trespassing brother."

Here, Lord, thou hast taught us to rebuke our brother when he trespasseth against us; and at the same time, if he repent, to forgive him: and though he should provoke us ever so often, yet, if he still repent, not to be weary of forgiving him. Oh grant us a heart to do this. How obdurately wicked shall we be, if we do otherwise, after what (we trust) thou hast done  
for

for us. Lord Jesus, how often hast thou forgiven us! And though it were not so, here is the greatest encouragement just now to seek thy pardoning mercy. "If he trespass against thee," thou hast said, "seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, -I repent, thou shalt forgive him." Lord, the frequency of our sins, our falling into them again and again after professing repentance, is a dreadful thing; but we repent, Lord Jesus, by thy grace, of this most wicked, provoking, and ungrateful impiety. Oh be pleased to forgive us, thou who hast taught us to forgive our brother. Indeed our offences against thee are far more heinous, as thou art infinitely higher than man, and we are under unspeakably greater obligations to thee. But thy mercy is also far greater than the best of theirs; blessed be thy name: we will yet therefore hope for pardon from thee. There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared; with thee there is mercy; with thee there is plenteous redemption; and thou wilt redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Verse 5 to 10. "Increase our faith.—But which  
" of you having a servant," &c.

Lord, give us faith; that ineffably precious faith in thee, which purifies the heart, which works by love, which overcomes the world, which is active in every good work; and increase this faith, that we may abound in love, and in all the fruits of righteousness to thy glory; looking on no duty as too difficult, no task as hard or unreasonable, if it be prescribed by thee. When we have been labouring or suffering according to thy will, let us not think we are to get rest or comfort

fort immediately ; but may we hold ourselves in readiness to serve thee farther, as thou shalt call for our poor service. And when we shall have done all these things that are commanded us, (as thou knowest we come short in every thing,) may we be ready from the heart to say, " We are unprofitable servants ; we have done that which " is our duty to do." Lord, give us to seek continually to serve and glorify thee : as for our rest, and peace, and comfort, we leave them in thy hand. Deal with us as thou pleasest. We hope in thy mercy.

Verse 11 to 19. " The ten lepers."

We join with these lepers in lifting up our voice, and saying, " Jesus, Master, have mercy upon " us." Thou seest this hateful and horrid leprosy, how it has infected our whole souls. Oh have mercy on us. Thou commandest us to read thy cleansing word, to hear it preached, to pray, and to use the other means of grace. We use them, Lord, at thy command, depending on thy Spirit alone for their efficacy. Oh grant, that while we observe thy directions, we may find ourselves cleansed ; and save us from the black crime of ingratitude. We would turn back, and with a loud voice glorify thee : we would fall down on our faces at thy feet, and give thee thanks. Glory be to thee for delivering in any measure from the reigning power of sin. Thanks for bringing us back to thee when we were on the brink of hell. Thanks for revealing thy Father to us, we would fain hope. Thanks and praise, O Lord Jesus, for all the instances of thy patience, and condescension, and mercy towards us miserable sinners, whom thou hast hitherto kept from hell, and,



and, we hope, wilt save from it for ever. Let us never forget what thou hast already done for us. We cannot express how amazing thy mercy has been : and oh how affecting is it to think, that it will yet appear greater. Oh that we were in heaven, that we might give thee thanks and praise in a right manner, with all the rest of thy redeemed.

Verse 20 to 37. " The answer to the Pharisees  
 " demanding when the kingdom of God  
 " should come ; — and the subsequent dis-  
 " course to the disciples."

The Pharisees, perhaps, expected a Messiah resembling the princes of this world ; but thy person and kingdom were of a very different nature. Yet, though there was no form nor comeliness in thee to a carnal eye, thy divine glory was perceived by those who believed in thee. In like manner thy kingdom made its way in a silent and peaceable manner, but with a divine energy ; so that the gates of hell could not resist it. And at that very time, when it appeared so inconsiderable to the Pharisees, thy true disciples felt the power and happiness of it in their hearts. Oh may it be established in our hearts ; that blessed kingdom of thine, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; and we shall be happier than if possessed of all the kingdoms of the world.

Thou saidst to thy disciples, " The days will  
 " come, when ye shall desire to see one of the  
 " days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see  
 " it." Lord, it is not by the power of men, nor according to their desires, but by thy Spirit alone, that the preaching of thy kingdom is made successful.

cessful. Praise to thee for all the glorious days of thy power, which have been seen at different times, when it pleased thee to work ; and blessed be thy name for the hope of the glorious days yet to come, before the end of the world. We would join with all the members of thy true church every where, in praying for the hastening of these days. Lord, how desirous is the prospect of them ! Oh take to thee thy great power, and reign gloriously over all the earth. How exactly were thy words fulfilled relating to the sudden and amazing spread of thy gospel at the beginning, after thou hadst suffered many things, and been rejected by that generation. Thy coming in the gospel kingdom was like lightning shining from one part of heaven to the other ; and thy righteous judgments came upon the impenitent unbelieving Jews, as the flood upon the old world, and the shower of fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Lord, save us from every degree of that unbelief and hardness of heart, which make obstinate sinners despise thy warnings. May we flee from the wrath to come, and take sanctuary under thy wings, where we shall certainly be safe. Thou warndest thy disciples to flee out of Judea in the days of vengeance, and not to think of returning to it ; assuring them, that whosoever should seek to save his life, should lose it ; and whosoever should lose his life, should preserve it. Lord, help us to flee out of a natural state for the life of our souls, and not to look back to it, nor think of it any more but with horror. May we remember the dreadful punishment of Lot's wife, who looked back to Sodom. And as to temporal calamities, give us, Lord Jesus, true faith in thee, and we shall not need to be terrified by them ; for whoever is taken, and  
whoever

whoever is left, it is the will of thy Father, that of all which he hath given thee thou shouldst lose nothing, and thou hast undertaken to keep them. While divine judgments gather about the impenitent, like birds of prey about a carcase, all the members of thy body shall be safe by virtue of their union with thee.

## C H A P. XVIII.

Verse 1 to 8. "The importunate widow."

We bless thee for speaking a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Having such encouragement from thy own mouth, we would pray without ceasing. Lord, give us grace to do it. Oh thou righteous Judge, avenge us of our adversaries; avenge us of these wicked dispositions, which are the adversaries of thy glory, and of the work of thy grace in our hearts. We have long cried to thee against them; we trust thou wilt now avenge us speedily. And oh give us faith in prayer. Notwithstanding the assurance thou hast given, of thy Father's readiness to hear, it seems from thy word, that there will be a time when faith will be very rare, hardly to be found on the earth. It is not of man, but it is thy free gift, O Lord. Oh bestow it upon us for the sake of thy glory, and for the salvation of these immortal souls: and give us to ask it with unwearied importunity; for thou knowest that without it we cannot expect to obtain any other blessing. And give it, Lord, to all who call upon thy name; yea, give it to all, that they may call upon thee, and graciously increase where thou hast implanted it.

Verse

Verse 9 to 14. "The Pharisee and Publican."

Thou art against those who trust in themselves, that they are righteous, and despise others. Keep us from this abominable temper. Thou knowest, that a conceit of our own righteousness would be peculiarly hateful in us, because we have been very great sinners : and if thou, Oh our God, hast plucked us as brands out of the fire, as we would fain hope thou hast done to some of us ; yet our provocations, since that time, have been so many and so aggravated, that the force of truth obliges us to confess we are less than the least of all saints ; so that we have not even the vain and groundless pretence of the Pharisee, for trusting in ourselves that we are righteous. How intolerable then would every degree of pride or self-conceit be in us ! Lord, keep us from it. Keep us also from despising others : let us not despise them as meaner than us, since they equally partake of the human nature, so highly dignified by thy incarnation, and are equally capable of thy divine image, and the enjoyment of thee through eternity. Let us not despise them as guiltier, because, however gross their enormities are, thou only canst judge whether we or they are upon the whole most guilty. Let us not despise them as having fewer talents, because what they want in one kind, they may have in another ; and they may make a better improvement of what they have, than we do. Nor as having less grace, because this is what we are not competent judges of. Lord, let us not despise our neighbour in any way ; but may we judge and condemn ourselves, as we have good reason to do.



## C H A P. XIX.

Verse 1 to 10. "Zaccheus the publican."

Here we observe an earnest desire in Zaccheus to see thee; a desire so strong, that it made him, though he was chief of the publicans and a rich man, not ashamed to climb up into a tree, to get a sight of thee passing by—Thy kind call to him to come down, and entertain thee at his house—His ready compliance, and his receiving thee joyfully—The murmuring of the people against thy going into the house of one whom they looked upon as a profligate—Zaccheus's justice and charity; the fruits of thy grace in his soul—Thy gracious declaration, "This day salvation is come to this house; for so much as he also is the son of Abraham"—Thy still more gracious declaration with respect to sinners in general, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Lord, give us the highest esteem of thy blessed name, and the most earnest desire to see thee; a desire superior to all temporal considerations. And oh be pleased to invite thyself into our hearts, where by thy grace we would receive thee most joyfully. Oh blessed Son of God, and of man, thou camest to seek and save that which was lost. How utterly lost were we, when it pleased thee (we would fain hope) to seek and save us. But if we be mistaken in this, we are doubly lost. Oh merciful Jesus, now seek and save us, that we may not perish for ever. We must, we will hope in thee.

Verse

Verse 14 and verse 27, compared with verse 41 to 44. "Those who hated the king commanded to be slain before him.—And "Jesus weeping over Jerusalem."

Blessed Saviour, thy citizens hated thee, and would not have thee to reign over them. By this they brought themselves under remarkable divine vengeance, the prospect of which greatly affected thee, and made thee lament their obstinacy with many tears. How exactly was thy prediction of their overthrow fulfilled! Hence we learn the certain and fearful ruin of those who hate and reject the Son of God, and will not have him to reign over their souls; and with what deep commiseration all, who have the same mind that was in thee, must look upon obstinate unbelievers. Lord, grant to all thy disciples, and especially to ministers, much of this divine temper: and oh give sinners to know the time of their visitation.

Verse 40. "If these should hold their peace,"  
"the stones would immediately cry out."

It is absolutely necessary thy blessed name should be praised, and thy glorious salvation proclaimed. There is enough in this subject to make the dullest heart to indite good matter, and the most stammering tongue the pen of a ready writer. Whatever we are silent about, let us not be silent here. How miserable are they who do not join! We rejoice, that in spite of the envy of hell, and the wickedness of the earth, there shall never be wanting multitudes to praise thy name here below; and that there shall be a multitude in heaven, which no man can num-

ber, whose happy employment this will be through eternity.

## C H A P. XX.

Verse 16. " They said, God forbid."

Lord, keep from impenitence and hardness of heart. Keep from thinking it enough to deprecate the punishments foretold in thy word, while there is a continuance in any course that leads to them. Thou lookedst stedfastly on these men, and referredst them to the word of God. When we behold thee by faith looking stedfastly on us, may the light of thy countenance dispel all the mists of error, and delusion, and sinful inclinations, and dispose us to follow thy will in all things.

Verse 35, 36. " They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, &c."

How is it, Lord, that thy disciples shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world? Is it not by their believing in thee whose merit has purchased it? It is not by their being made meet for the possession of it by thy Spirit? Lord, give us union with thee by faith, and thy Spirit in our hearts; and we shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and shall for ever acknowledge that eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. O what a blessed state shall we then be in? Immortal; equal to the angels, with whom we shall praise and serve thee; children of God fully declared, in consequence of our being fitted for the heavenly world, both in soul and  
body.

body. Blessed be thy name for ever, for revealing and purchasing and bestowing that glorious world.

## C H A P. XXI.

Verse 34 to 36. "Take heed to yourselves, &c."

Lord, we would turn these words of thine into a resolution and a prayer. We resolve by thy grace to take heed to ourselves, least at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting or drunkenness, or the cares of this life, and so the day of death or of judgment come upon us unawares. We would in thy strength watch and pray always, that we may be accounted worthy to escape all the evils that shall come upon the impenitent, and to stand before thee, and serve thee day and night in thy temple. O incline our hearts steadily and unweariedly to pursue this course.

Verse 37, 38. "Our Lord's diligence in his  
"work."

After teaching in the temple in the day time, thou wentest out at night to abide in the mount of Olives. It does not certainly appear that thou wast lodged in any house there. Perhaps there were some who received thee secretly. Or if none, it was not the first time thou passedst the night under the open sky. However mean thy lodging or fare, thou wast early in the morning at thy work of teaching. How ought thy example to shame effeminacy and sloth! Let no hardship or toil in the way of duty frighten us, when we look on thee. May we have power from thee to do and suffer according to thy will.



## C H A P. XXII.

Verse 15 to 18. " With desire have I desired  
" to eat this passover."

Glory to thee, dear Lord, for earnestly desiring the salvation of sinners, though brought about by sufferings so tremendous. Thou rejoicest that the true paschal Lamb was now to be offered, though thyself was the victim; that the kingdom of God was now to come, in the light and grace of the Gospel, though by means of thy bitter agony and death. Lord, grant that the advancement of thy kingdom may be our chief desire, and its prosperity our greatest joy.

Verse 31, 32. " I have prayed for thee that  
" thy faith fail not."

How kind and condescending was it in thee Lord, to speak thus to one that was so full of self-confidence! Blessed be thou, who carefully observe all the malicious designs of Satan against thy disciples, and art still more vigilant to defend and preserve, than he is to accuse and destroy. Blessed be thou, who prayest for them that their faith may not fail. Hath not Satan often desired to have their souls to sift them as wheat, and in the hour of temptation to make appear all the chaff and tares and dust that are mixt with thy grace in them. But we trust thou hast prayed for us, that our faith might not utterly fail. We see there is a second conversion. Alas, we have often fallen, some of us since it pleased thee first to touch our hearts. Oh convert us thoroughly to thyself. Heal all our backslidings, and give us grace

to strengthen our brethren. Or, if we are yet in the dreadful state of alienation from thee, O merciful Lord Jesus now pity. O deliver these souls from Satan. Make haste to help us from the jaws of the roaring lion; make no tarrying, O our God.

Verse 35 to 38. "When I sent you without  
"purse or scrip, &c."

Thou, dear Lord, never deceivedst any one. Nothing was wanting to thy disciples, when thou sentest them first to preach thy Gospel, without any visible means of subsistence, saying, "The workman is worthy of his meat." But now when the things concerning thee were to have an end; when thou their Lord and master wast to be numbered amongst transgressors, and put to an infamous death; what could thy disciples expect but hatred and opposition? They had more need of a sword to defend them from such cruel enemies, than of a garment to keep off the inclemencies of the air. Yet, blessed be thy name, they were and still are more than conquerors through thy love.

Verse 43, 44. "The agony."

What an awful sight was this! Thy sweat was like great drops of blood falling to the ground. The inward anguish from which this proceeded, who can conceive? O give us right views and impressions of it. How dreadful must have been the burden of guilt laid upon thy innocent soul? Glory to thee for delivering poor sinners from it by bearing it thyself. An angel was sent to strengthen thee. It was surely the most honourable office

any angel or creature was ever employed in. May we think it our greatest honour to administer comfort to thy poor afflicted members. Thou madest supplication to thy Father with strong cries and tears, and wast heard in that thou fearedst. O may we be helped by thy spirit to cry and wrestle in prayer, and may we be heard for thy sake. And when we are called to suffer pain and to die, when the cold sweat of death is upon us, let the remembrance of thy agony be our comfort, and thy gracious presence support us in that hour of trial.

## C H A P. XXIII.

Verse 6 to 12. "Jesus is sent to Herod."

Blessed Lord, every circumstance contributed to encrease thy sufferings. Among the rest, that thou shouldst be exposed to the insults of this proud, wicked man. Pilate, willing to get rid of the guilt of condemning an innocent person, and perhaps desirous to show respect to Herod, sent thee to him. Herod was exceeding glad; but alas! it was not that he might get his sins pardoned, and his soul saved, but because he had heard many things of thee, and hoped to have seen some miracle. This vain curiosity in a wicked unbelieving heart, thou wouldst not gratify. And when he questioned thee in many words, thou answeredst him nothing. Lord Jesus! We would not by thy grace do as Herod did. If we had opportunity of seeing thee with the eyes of our body, we would indeed be exceeding glad; but we trust this gladness would be mixed with the greatest reverence. We would fall at thy feet, and seek salvation to our perishing souls: that thou  
wouldst

wouldst graciously forgive all our sins, and grant us thy Spirit to lead us into all truth, and to sanctify us wholly. And this, O merciful Saviour, is the request we just now make to thee. Though we cannot see thee with our bodily eyes, we assuredly know thou art in heaven, and that thou knowest all things, and art able and willing to save to the uttermost. O hear us, and help our unbelief.

Herod's disappointed curiosity and pride turned into raging insolence. He with his men of war set thee, dearest Lord, at nought, and mocked thee, and arrayed thee in a gorgeous robe, and sent thee back to Pilate as one whom he judged, not indeed worthy of death, but a proper object of scorn and derision. O Saviour, the more thou art despised by the wicked, the more may we love and adore thy blessed name. The more may all thy redeemed in heaven and earth exult in the glory thy Father hath given thee.

Herod and Pilate were made friends on this occasion. Lord, keep us from that friendship which is founded on impiety and infidelity, which indeed deserves not the name of friendship, and can produce none but the most dismal fruits.

Verse 27 to 34. "Weep not for me, but for yourselves."

Thy sufferings, Lord, were not a proper subject for wailing and lamentation, but rather for admiration of thy filial obedience, gratitude for thy redeeming love, horror at sin for which thou thus sufferedst, and commiseration for the wretchedness of the blind and hardened instruments of thy death. There was no occasion to weep for thee, as if thou hadst been unhappy; for thou wast divinely



vinely glorious and blessed in the deepest humiliation. Therefore thou desiredst these mourners to reserve their tears for themselves, and their children. Thy heart felt the greatest compassion for thy murderers, expressing itself in praying to thy father to forgive them, because they knew not what they did. Help us, Lord, when we remember thy sufferings, to be grieved for our own misery, which procured them; and which will still be greater, if we do not believe in thee: and for these wretched persons who reject the benefit of them. What will become of such? If these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? O merciful Saviour, let them yet be converted and saved.

Verse 34. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Blessed Lord, how unconquerable must that love have been, which uttered these words! there never was such a prayer before. It was a stream of thy divine compassion that broke out toward thy murderers, just when they were nailing thee to the cross. In that hour of trial thou lookedst upon them with tender pity, and lifting up thy soul to thy Father, prayedst for them: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Though thy Father permitted thy enemies to treat thee in this manner, thou didst not take it ill at his hand. Thou knewest his love, and that he was still thy Father: "Father, forgive them." This prayer was not for thyself, but for thy crucifiers. Thy mind was superior to the pains of the cross. It was more pained for the sake of those

those poor blinded souls, that were plunging themselves into such dreadful guilt. O loving Saviour, who that is not void of all the feelings of humanity, can forbear admiring thy goodness.

"They know not what they do." When they came afterwards to know it, they were pierced with remorse and anguish. When Paul came to know what he had done against thee, he could not forgive himself: But thou forgavest both him and them. And where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Never were hearts so filled with love to thy name, as those of thy pardoned persecutors and murderers.

Glory to thee, thy love is as great as ever. Thou still prayest for miserable men who do not know thee. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Many blasphemers, many infidels, many grievous transgressors, have been already forgiven; and many will yet be forgiven at thy intercession. Lord, open their eyes, that they may see whom they are sinning against. And cause them to feel what thy murderers felt, both when they were convinced, and when they were pardoned.

There is so much goodness; such amiable, sweet, overcoming power in this prayer of thine; that we cannot have the least hesitation to commit all our interests in time and eternity, with unbounded confidence, to the heart from which it came. Do with us what thou plearest. Only suffer us not to sin against such love. Let us not be guilty of returning evil for such divine goodness.

And, O give us the high honour (too high honour for us to ask if thou hadst not made it our duty) to imitate thy goodness. To pray, from  
our

our hearts, for those who are injurious to us; and affectionately to love and pity them.

### C H A P. XXIV.

Verse 13 to 32. "The disciples going to  
"Emmaus."

In this memorable history it appears, that while the two disciples talked together of all those things which had happened concerning thee, blessed Lord, while they communed together and reasoned, thou thyself drewest near, and wentest along with them, and joinedst in their conversation. This teaches us to discourse with our Christian friends, not so much on other matters, as upon the interests of thy kingdom; and that in so doing we may humbly hope for thy gracious presence with us.

Again we see from this passage, that there are many things in the Old Testament scriptures which relate to thee and thy sufferings and glory. Though they are not particularly quoted here, yet thou sayest, "All things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." We bless thee that we know any of these things from the writings of thy Evangelists and Apostles. Lord, open our understandings, that we may understand them all. Let us not be blind, and slow of heart to believe what the prophets have spoken. Let us not overlook any passages that really point to thee, or to thy kingdom. Neither let us put a forced interpretation upon others that have no such reference; enlighten

lighten and guide us, and let it be our delight to discover thee in the sacred writings. May our hearts burn within us, while thou talkest with us by the way, and openest to us the scriptures. We cannot but remark also, that if the two disciples had been indifferent about thy company, and had not relished thy discourse, thou wouldst have left them; but they constrained thee to abide with them, and in consequence of this, as thou satest at meat with them, their eyes were opened, and they knew thee. O Lord Jesus, let us never be weary of thy conversation. And we beg thou wouldst abide with us, for it is towards the evening of many of our lives. The day is far spent. Come in then, thou Lord of glory, and tarry with thy poor servants; though we are not worthy that thou shouldst come under our roof; yet we cannot be happy; we have no peace without thee. And thou hast been pleased to invite thyself into the hearts of poor sinners. Come then, Lord, and make thy abode with us, and give us to know, when thou suppest with us, that thou art indeed that Jesus who was crucified, but is now alive, and lives for evermore, and art our Lord and our God.

Verse 36 to 48. "As they thus spake, Jesus  
"himself stood in the midst of them."

Dearest Lord! instead of upbraiding them for basely forsaking thee, contrary to their solemn protestations, thy words and behaviour were full of love; "Peace be unto you," and "why are ye troubled? why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself." When Joseph discovered himself to his brethren, they were troubled at his presence:



sence: so it seems it was here. But how much more affecting and joyful was the discovery! perhaps, too, when thy servants depart out of this life into the world of spirits, they are terrified and affrighted as the disciples were here. How transporting will the change be when thou meetest their souls in paradise! Joy and wonder will then be so great as to weaken faith, if it was not turned into open vision. O our Saviour, we trust in thee.

Another thing in this passage most admirable, is, that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in thy name, beginning at Jerusalem. Jerusalem, where thou wast crucified. Jerusalem, full of bloody sinners, who could not be at rest till they put thee to a cruel and infamous death, and whose rage increased with thy sufferings, mocking and insulting thee amidst thy dying prayers. Yet Jerusalem-sinners must have the first offer of salvation. And blessed be thy name, many of them were made to accept of it; and so changed by faith in thee, as to be ready to lay down their lives for thy sake, whom they had so lately crucified. Thus were thy prayers for these Jerusalem sinners heard. O merciful Saviour, pity us, and take us in among them.

Verse 49. "Behold I send the promise of my  
"Father upon you."

They waited for the promise of thy Father, which thou wast to send them, and were soon endowed with power from on high, according to thy word. O ascended Lord, ought not we also to wait for thy Holy Spirit? For thou hast promised, that thy Father will give him to them that ask him. Thou knowest we have often asked this unspeakable

able gift, and do now ask and implore it. We trust therefore, that we also, though most unworthy, shall receive thy Holy Spirit, not to enable us to work miracles, but for the salvation of our souls.

Verse 50 to 53. "He lifted up his hands and blessed them, &c."

The last thing thou didst upon earth, Lord, was to bless thy disciples. While thou wast blessing them, thou wast parted from them, and carried up into heaven. O Lord Jesus, bless us this day. Let us not be like Esau. We will not let thee go, except thou bless us : thou hast ascended on high, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. O give us thy blessing, and we ask no more. We will then with the-disciples be filled with great joy, and will be continually, in the temple of our hearts, praising and blessing thee. Amen.

JOHN.

## J O H N

## C H A P. I.

Verse 1 to 19. "In the beginning was the Word," &c.

**L**ORD Jesus! thou art the Word that was in the beginning, the Word that was with God, the Word that was God, the Word that was in the beginning with God. All things were made by thee, and without thee was not any thing made that was made. In thee is life, and the life is the light of men. O make us partakers of thy light and thy life. Let us not be that darkness which comprehends not the light shining in it. Give us to know thee as the Word of God, and as the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. Thou wast in the world, and the world was made by thee, and the world knew thee not. Thou camest to thy own, and thy own received thee not: but as many as received thee, to them gavest thou power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in thy name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Lord, give us to believe in thy name; to receive thee, as true believers in thy name do. We desire to receive thee with our whole hearts, most thankfully and joyfully: to receive thee in all thy offices: to receive thee as the unspeakable gift of God to perishing sinners: to receive thee truly, and in the full meaning of the expression. Lord, grant it may be so, and we shall then have the

the glorious privilege of being the sons of God, and of being born from above, by thy Spirit.

O Word made flesh, and dwelling among us, full of grace and truth ! give us to behold thy glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, and out of thy fulness to receive grace for grace. Let a portion of every grace of thine be mercifully communicated to us, as to thy first disciples. O wonderful ! that any of mankind should be allowed to ask such a thing ; and still more wonderful, that it should be actually bestowed. But we are utterly miserable, if we receive not out of thy fulness ; and it is thy glory to communicate of thy fulness to the poor and needy. Give us of it, gracious Lord ; for there is enough in thee richly to supply us all.

We acknowledge the glory of thy law, which was given by Moses ; but thy gospel hath a glory that excelleth. The law worketh wrath ; but the gospel brings grace, mercy, and peace. The law had the shadow of good things to come ; but in the gospel thou hast brought the good things themselves. No man hath seen God at any time : the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. Oh declare his name to us, and declare it more and more, that (according to thy own gracious words) the love wherewith the Father hath loved thee may be in us, and thou in us.

Verse 29 and 36 to 43. " Behold the Lamb  
" of God."

We rejoice to hear the voice of this great prophet proclaiming thee " the Lamb of God, who  
" takest away the sin of the world, and directing  
" all to behold thee." Lord, open our eyes, and  
P give



give us to look unto thee, that we may be saved. With the two disciples of John we would follow thee, and want to know where thou dwellest, that we may abide with thee. The places of thy abode upon earth were very mean; but now thou dwellest in heaven at the right hand of thy Father. O draw our hearts after thee. O give us an interest in thee, and make us sensible of it; and we will, like Andrew, tell our relations and friends, that we have found true happiness, and will exhort them to seek it in thee only.

Verse 47 to 50. "Nathanael."

Lord, make us like Nathanael; Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile. With him we acknowledge thee to be the Son of God, and the King of Israel. Thou seest us in our most secret retirements: Thou hast already given some of us to experience many things tending to beget and to confirm faith: but we hope thou wilt shew us still greater things than these.

Verse 51. "You shall see heaven open," &c.

How was this accomplished; Lord, may we humbly enquire? Is not here a reference to that mysterious ladder which Jacob saw in his dream, that was set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascended and descended on it? Was not that an emblem of thy mediation betwixt heaven and earth, and of thy divine and human nature? The angels ministred to thee while upon earth, and attended thee when thou wast received up into heaven. O glorious Mediator betwixt God and man; thou knowest what reason some of us have to be affected,

affected, when we read the words that were spoken to Jacob on that occasion. O grant, that as they have already been accomplished in those who are now in heaven, they may be accomplished in us also. O be with us, and keep us in all places whither we go, and do not leave us until thou hast done that which thou hast spoken.

## C H A P. II.

Verse 1 to 11. "The first miracle at Cana in  
"Galilee."

Here we learn that the marriage state is honourable and sacred. We see also thy blessed mother, though a most eminent saint, and highly favoured of God, reprimanded for meddling in what was thy own proper work, and not waiting thy time. But she received the check with meekness and humility, obeying thee herself, and willing others to do the same. May we learn from this striking example to beware of preventing thee in any thing. May we patiently wait thy time, and endeavour ourselves, and exhort others, to obey and submit to thy will in all things. By the miracle thou performedst on this occasion, it is said, thou manifestedst forth thy glory, and thy disciples believed on thee. May we humbly enquire, Lord, how this was? Perhaps there was something in the manner of doing it, and in thy presence and behaviour, which discovered a peculiar glory to thy disciples. One ray of thy glory we see, that thou wouldst not let the affection which these poor people bore to thee go unrewarded; thou wouldst rather supply their wants by a miracle. Another thing remarkable

was, that thou madest their water to become wine. In this perhaps there was an intimation, that they who feared God, and waited for redemption in Israel, as these poor people did, were now to have their sorrow turned into joy; for thou wast sent to comfort the mourners of Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Glory to thy name for making thyself known to any of us, and bringing our souls out of a dismal night into a pleasant day of serenity and joy. Then our water was turned into wine indeed. O what base ingratitude and folly, to lose by our sins this sweet peace. Lord, pardon and sanctify us, and restore to us the joy of thy salvation. Thou canst, Lord, if thou pleasest, yet make us say, "Thou hast kept the good wine "until now." But if it should not be so, Lord, give us real grace, a true interest in thee, and then the best wine will certainly be kept to the last; for in a little time we shall, through thy merits, be admitted into that blessed society, with whom thou drinkest it new in the kingdom of thy Father. Praise to thy name for ever.

Verse 13 to 17. "Buyers and sellers driven  
"out of the temple."

O give us a zeal like thine for the purity of thy Father's house, of his living temples. May we be deeply and earnestly concerned, that every one who names thy name may depart from iniquity, and be purged from every thing unsuitable to their being consecrated and devoted to thy service. These bodies of ours, if we be thy disciples, are certainly temples of thy holy Spirit: Why then, O Lord, why are we thus? Why do these

these vain thoughts lodge within us ? How long shall it be ? Let not our Lord be angry when we plead with thy church of old, " Look down  
 " from heaven, and behold from the habitation  
 " of thy holiness and of thy glory : where is thy  
 " zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy  
 " bowels and of thy mercy towards us ? Are they  
 " restrained ?" O zealous and almighty Saviour, make haste to do in our souls what thou didst in the temple of Jerusalem, and we will rejoice in thy salvation.

Verse 18 to 25. " What sign shewest thou," &c.

When the Jews, not content with the miracles they saw thee perform, sought a sign from thee, thou referredst them to the great miracle of thy resurrection, which thou elsewhere callest the sign of the prophet Jonas. They did not; it seems, through their inconsideration, and unbelief, and hardness of heart, understand thy words ; but afterwards perverted them to be matter of accusation, as if thou hadst threatened to destroy the temple of Jerusalem. But thy disciples remembered them after thou wast risen from the dead, and believed the scripture, and the word which thou hadst said. May we seriously weigh thy important words, and observe their accomplishment in the course of thy providence ; and how they throw light on one another, and on the other parts of scripture ; and thereby may our belief of both be confirmed more and more. It is said, " Many  
 " believed in thy name when they saw thy miracles ; but thou didst not commit thyself to them." Was this because their faith was not of a right kind ? or only because it was weak, and attended with such imperfections as imprudence and rash-



ness? Lord, give us true faith in thy name, that faith of divine operation, which unites to thee, purifies the heart, overcomes the world, works by love, and perseveres to the end. And O take out of our hearts every thing that is offensive to thee. Thou knowest all men: thou needest not that any should testify of man, for thou knowest what is in man. What a wonder, that thou shouldst love those of whom thou knowest so much evil!

## C H A P. III.

Verse 1 to 21. "Our Lord's Discourse with  
"Nicodemus."

Lord Jesus, we come to thee, with Nicodemus, to be instructed in the way of salvation. We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do those miracles which thou didst, except God be with him. The first instruction thou givest is, "Except a man be  
"born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Lord, give us thus to be born again: give us that in our souls which is spirit, born of the Spirit. Thou sayest, "Marvel not that I said unto  
"you, Ye must be born again. The wind blow-  
"eth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound  
"thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh,  
"and whither it goeth: so is every one that is  
"born of the Spirit." O grant that we may know we have undergone this great change by its visible effects on our hearts and lives. Thou speakest the things that thou knowest, and hast seen. We willingly and thankfully receive thy testimony concerning both earthly and heavenly things;

things; for thou canst neither deceive nor be deceived. No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even thou the Son both of God and man, who wast in heaven by thy divine nature, while thy human nature was upon earth. We adore thee as true God and true man in one glorious person.

Blessed be thy name for declaring, that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so it behoved thee, the Son of man, to be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in thee should not perish, but have eternal life. Thou seest, Lord, how sin and the old serpent have stung and poisoned us: we are all over one wound. O thou blessed Antitype of the brazen serpent, we look to thee lifted up on the cross; (give us to look aright.) We look to thee lifted up in heaven. We wait for thy healing virtue. O save us for thy mercy's sake. Glory be to God in the highest, that ever he so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Glory and praise to God, who sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. How just and dreadful is the condemnation of those who believe not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God! Thou, who knowest what is in man, testifiest, that this unbelief flows from loving darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. Lord, deliver all who are under this condemnation. Give them to repent of their evil deeds, and no more to hate the light. Give them to do truth, and then they will be willing to come to the light, that their deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. May we by thy grace ever live in this manner.

Verse 25 to 36. " John's answer to those who  
 " told him that Jesus baptized, and all men  
 " came to him."

Lord, give us the same mind that was in the Baptist, who would take nothing to himself except it was given him from heaven ; who, as thy friend and servant, sought not his own glory, but thine. Thou art the heavenly Bridegroom, who hast espoused the church to thyself. May all who preach thy gospel rejoice greatly because of thy voice ; and when thy glory is most promoted, may their joy be fulfilled. May they rejoice to decrease, that thou mayest increase ; being sensible, that they and their ministrations are no farther valuable, than as they are instrumental in bringing souls to thee. Thou alone art worthy of all glory. How truly did the Baptist say, concerning thy divine person and doctrine, (O that all mankind might hear and believe ! ) " He  
 " that cometh from above, is above all : he that  
 " is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the  
 " earth ; he that cometh from heaven is above  
 " all." What ground of joy to have such a teacher ! What thou hast seen and heard, that thou testifiest : yet, alas ! how few receive thy testimony. He that receiveth thy testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true. Lord, we receive thy testimony. We believe ; help thou our unbelief. Thou, whom God hath sent, speakest the words of God ; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto thee. O give us of thy Spirit, that we may understand thy divine words, and feed upon them, and lay them up in our hearts, and be furnished by them for every good work. We rejoice that the Father loveth thee, and hath given all things into thy hand. Thou wilt order  
 all

all with perfect justice, and wisdom, and mercy. He that believeth on thee, hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not thee, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. O dreadful condition of unbelievers, who reject thee, the only remedy, and will abide in their sins ; therefore the wrath of God abideth on them. How can it be otherwise, consistently with the perfect holiness of the divine nature ? Their wickedness is also its own punishment. Lord, give us to believe on thee, and we are delivered from all this misery ; yea, we have everlasting life. We have it in right ; we have it in hope ; and we have it in some degree of present enjoyment. O give us this faith by thy blessed Spirit. Amen.

## C H A P. IV.

Verse 1 to 26, &c. " His conversation with  
" the woman of Samaria."

Here we see thee, Lord, withdrawing from the rage of thy persecutors, till thou hadst fulfilled thy ministry. But go where thou wouldst, thou wast still doing good. We adore thee wearied with thy journey, sitting by the way-side on a well, and asking a drink of water from a stranger. When we remember this, let us never think it much to suffer weariness and thirst in thy service. The woman seemed surprized that thou, being a Jew, shouldst ask drink of her, a Samaritan : but, O loving Redeemer, thou despisest none of mankind who are willing to receive thy salvation. The souls of the Samaritans, though blind idolaters, were precious in thy sight, as well as those of the Jews. Thou mildly saidst to her, " If thou  
" knewest



“ knewest the gift of God, and who it is that  
“ saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst  
“ have asked of him, and he would have given  
“ thee living water.” Lord, suffer us to take hold  
of these words of thine. Thou art the gift of God  
to a lost world. It hath pleased the Father that in  
thee all fulness should dwell. O give us living  
water to satisfy the thirst of our souls. Alas ! we  
have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and  
have hewn out to ourselves broken cisterns : we  
have been seeking to quench our thirst with the  
muddy poisonous draughts of sin. O take us  
back to the fountain of living waters ; restore us  
to the favour of thy God and thy Father, that he  
may be our God and our Father ; and pour thy  
Spirit into our hearts. O do it, Lord, and we  
shall be satisfied. “ Whosoever drinketh of any  
“ other water shall thirst again ; but whoso-  
“ ever drinketh of the water that thou givest  
“ him, shall never thirst ; but the water that  
“ thou givest him shall be in him a well of water  
“ springing up unto everlasting life.” Tho’ we  
should drink ever so deep of worldly pleasures, or  
riches, or honours, we should still be thirsty ; but  
the living water which thou givest, when thou  
comest thyself into our hearts, and bringest us to  
thy Father, and fillest us with thy holy Spirit,  
will satisfy all our desires. We shall be happy :  
we shall no more want any thing : we shall have  
all things. Thou couldst tell the woman all that  
ever she did. Thou knowest every thing we have  
done, or spoken, or thought. How would it  
fill us with shame and confusion, if any human  
creature knew it all. Thou knowest it, and yet  
thou allowest us to seek thy face, and freely of-  
ferest us salvation. Lord God, wash us in thy  
blood, and make us holy by thy Spirit.

Save

Save us from the idolatry of the Samaritans, who worshipped they knew not what; and from the carnality of the Jews, who did not worship God in spirit. May we be the true worshippers, whom the Father seeketh to worship him. O heavenly Father, may we ever worship thee with the utmost sincerity, and with our whole heart and soul. Blessed Lord Jesus, thou art the Messiah, whose office it is to teach thy disciples all things necessary to the worship and service of thy Father. O be pleased to teach us. Gracious Instructor, suffer us not to be deceived in any thing that is of importance to thy glory, or to the salvation of our souls. O manifest thyself to us, as thou didst to the woman, when thou saidst, "I that speak to thee am the Messiah:" and as thou didst to the other Samaritans, who believed on thee because of thy own word. May we also be able to say, "Now we believe not because of the testimony of others; for we have heard thee ourselves, and know that thou art indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

Verse 31 to 39. "His disciples prayed him, "Master, eat."

Thy hunger, and weariness, and thirst, were all forgot, while thou wast employed in gaining a soul to God. This was thy meat, to do the will of him that sent thee, and to finish his work. O give us to be like-minded; for surely, Lord, it is not presumption to ask what is graciously promised. May we also have this meat to eat, which the world knows not of: may it be our meat to do thy will, and to finish the work thou hast appointed us.

Verse

Verse 35 to 38. "Yet four months, and then  
"cometh the harvest."

While men are very busy and careful about an earthly harvest, thy harvest, O gracious Saviour, is the salvation of souls, and gathering them into heaven. Blessed be thy grace, which makes the fields at any time white, and ready for harvest. O send forth thy servants to reap and receive wages, and gather fruit unto life eternal. Delightful task! blessed wages! But, above all, joy unspeakable and full of glory, when he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together. O what a jubilee will it be, when all thy prophets, and apostles, and ministers, shall rejoice in seeing the innumerable multitude of precious souls brought home to heaven. Thy joy, O glorious Lord, will then be above all the rest, as thy love is above all. And the whole glory will be thine; for thy servants only enter into thy labours. It is to thy labours, thy sufferings, thy blood, that every redeemed soul owes its salvation; let the praise therefore be entirely ascribed to thee.

Verse 46 to 54. "The nobleman, whose son  
"was sick at Capernaum."

The centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy  
"that thou shouldst come under my roof; but  
"speak the word only, and my servant shall be  
"healed." This nobleman besought thee to  
come down from Cana to Capernaum to heal his  
son, as if thou couldst not command him to be  
healed, without coming. Is not this the reason,  
O Lord, why the faith of the one is commended,  
and the faith of the other so diminutively spoken  
of? yet thou didst not reject him. When with  
the

the same weak faith he continued earnestly to plead, "Sir, come down ere my child die;" thou grantedst his request, saying, "Go thy way; thy son liveth:" at the same time strengthening him to believe the word that thou hadst spoken unto him. We hope, merciful God, thou hast said to many of our souls, Live: yea, when we were in our blood, thou saidst, Live, (Ezek. xvi.) and enteredst into a covenant with us. Alas! how unthankfully, how wickedly, how provokingly, have some of us behaved! O remember thy covenant with us, and establish to us an everlasting covenant. Establish thy holy covenant with us, and make us to know that thou art the Lord; that we may remember, and be confounded, and never open our mouths any more, because of our shame, when thou art pacified toward us for all that we have done.

But if our souls were never yet made to live, Lord, have mercy upon them now, before they die for ever; and have mercy upon the souls of all our relations and acquaintance that are yet unconverted. We believe, Lord help our unbelief, every word thou hast spoken. We believe these words: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And, "If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" In this belief we now pray: O heavenly Father, hear us for his sake, who hath assured us of this most comfortable and glorious truth. O give us thy holy Spirit savingly to convert us all. Lord, thou canst do it this moment, without the least delay. O speak the word, and it shall be done. Amen.



## CHAP V.

Verse 1 to 15. "The impotent man at the  
"pool of Bethesda."

Blessed Lord, it was prophesied of thee that thou wouldst deliver the poor, and him that hath no helper. Here was a remarkable instance of it. This poor man had been long diseased, and had long waited for a cure; and met with many disappointments, because he had no man to put him into the pool. In this helpless forlorn condition he lay, when thou camest to his relief. O merciful Saviour, had not some of us long lain under the most dreadful spiritual diseases, and no creature could help us, when thou wast pleased first to visit us with thy salvation. Didst thou not then restore health to our souls, and begin that cure which thou wilt perfect? If we are deceiving ourselves; Lord Jesus, come and look upon us. Thou seest we would fain be made whole, and have long been using the means, and have none to help us. O thou helper of the helpless, pity us, and say, Arise and walk. Thou didst not wait till the water was troubled, or till the sabbath was over, but commandedst deliverance for the poor, diseased, helpless man, that moment. O do the same to us. And say unto us, "Behold, ye  
"are made whole: sin no more."

Verse 15 to 31. "Our Lord's discourse to  
"the Jews who sought to slay him, because  
"he had healed on the sabbath; and made  
"himself equal with God."

Divine instructor! how sweet is it to sit at thy feet, and hear these heavenly truths thou hast revealed

vealed concerning thy Father and thee. O give us a clear view and a lively faith of them; and cause them to enter into our very hearts, and to be the means of producing there all suitable gracious dispositions. Thou sayest, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." All that men call the course of nature, is nothing but the continual operation of God. All is the Father's work and thine. May we see and adore thy Father and Thee in all. Thou sayest farther, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doth, these also doth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth. And as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." O Son of God, who quickenest whom thou wilt, give life to our souls, which are naturally dead in sin. Be pleased to shew us, by thy word, what judgment thou passest upon us at this time: if thou acquittest us now, we are sure thou wilt not condemn us at last. And though we should find we are still in a state of condemnation and death, thou invirest us, and yet canst bring us into a state of justification and life. Blessed be God, for committing all judgment to so merciful a Saviour. May we ever honour thee, as we honour thy Father, with equal reverence, love, dependance, gratitude, and praise. O give us to hear thy word, and to believe on him that sent thee; then may we be assured that we have everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but are passed from death unto life. As the Father hath

life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. Therefore thou madest the dead to hear thy voice, and hearing it to live. Thou also calledst dead souls into spiritual life, and still callest them: and the hour is coming, when all that are in the graves shall hear thy voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. Thy Father hath given thee authority to execute judgment upon mankind, because thou art the son of man. Thou wilt of thine own self do nothing. As thou hearest, thou judgest: and thy judgment is just; because thou seekest not thine own will, but the will of the Father who sent thee. O our gracious teacher and judge, make us what thou wouldst have us be; raise our souls to life, and direct and enable us in all things to do what is well-pleasing in thy sight; for thou knowest it is our habitual desire to approve ourselves to thee. Thou who hast given this desire, fulfil it Lord!

Verse 31 to 47. "He reasons with them, re-  
 "proves them, and complains of their un-  
 "belief."

These people had many evidences of thy being the Messiah. They had the testimony of John the Baptist, who was universally esteemed for the purity of his doctrine and life, and whom many of them were greatly taken with for a season. They had the testimony of Moses and the prophets. They had the testimony of the works which thy Father had given thee to finish, which were of the same nature with his own works. They had also the testimony of thy Father himself by a voice from  
 5 heaven.

heaven. But their carnal and impious hearts rejected all this evidence. They would not receive thee, who camest in thy Father's name, seeking his glory and will only : But the false prophets who came in their own name, and sought their own glory, them they would receive. Alas ! how obstinate are the prejudices of the world against thee and thy religion ! and how do they still work at this day. O that thou wouldst conquer them by thy almighty grace, which can make the most harden'd infidels thy willing people in the day of thy power ! Save us from these evils which were, and still are, the causes of unbelief : Unacquaintedness with thy Father : Not having his word abiding in the heart : Unwillingness to come to thee for life : Want of love to God : Greater regard to men than to God : Receiving honour from men, and not seeking the honour that cometh from God only.

Blessed be thy name, for any acquaintance thou hast given us with thy Father. Any spark of divine love ; any desire to come to thee for life. O encrease all these more and more ; or if we are deceiving ourselves, Lord pity and give us the reality of them ; give us to have thy word abiding in us : to search the scriptures for eternal life : to beware of trafficking with men for worldly honour : and to seek the honour that cometh from thee only.

Grant that all thy ministers may, like John, be burning and shining lights. May they burn with zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of Souls. May they shine by the heavenliness of their doctrine and exemplariness of their lives. May they willingly spend and be spent in thy service.



## C H A P. VI.

Verse 15. " Jesus withdraws from those who  
" wanted to make him a king."

How different was thy mind from that of the men of this world? Royalty is the great object of their ambition. But though thou couldst feed thousands with a few loaves; and heal the maimed with thy word; and raise the dead to life; so that it would have been nothing to thee to have raised and maintained great armies, and soon to have subdued the whole earth: And though they who saw thy miracles, were so desirous to make thee a king, that they proposed to do it by force: Instead of yielding to their desires, thou retiredst into a mountain, without any attendants, infinitely happier there, than Cæsar upon his throne.

Verse 25 to 66. " The discourse upon the  
" bread of life."

Let us seek thee, O Lord Jesus, not for loaves, but for the salvation of our souls, and for thy own sake. Let us work not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man, whom the Father hath attested and sealed, shall give to us: Cause us to work, in the first place, this work of God, to believe in thee whom he hath sent! O true bread given us by thy Father from heaven! O bread of God, which camest down from heaven, and givest life to the world! let our souls evermore feed on thee; do thou nourish, do thou refresh, do thou strengthen our hearts. O bread of life, give us to come to thee, and we shall  
never

never hunger, and to believe on thee, and we shall never thirst. For ever blessed be thy name, for declaring, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Thou knowest those who have been long supported by these words, and the words of thy Father, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." O heavenly Father, who hast sent thy Christ into the world, not to condemn, but to save it; draw us to him; for no man can come to him except thou drawest him: Teach us, O Father. Make us to hear and to learn of thee, that we may come to him: Abba Father! has not Christ revealed thee in some measure to our souls? And is not this a sign that thou hast given us to him. O cause us to come to him, and to know that we have come. Son of God, who camest down from heaven, not to do thy own will, but the will of him that sent thee; thou hast assured us that this is the Father's will who sent thee, that of all which he hath given thee thou shouldst lose nothing, but shouldst raise it up again at the last day: And that this is his will, that every one that seeth thee, and believeth on thee, may have everlasting life; and thou wilt raise him up at the last day. Thou hast also said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." O give us rightly to believe in thee, and we shall be perfectly safe and happy. Thy Father's love and thy love shall both be engaged for our salvation. We shall live to thee while in this world; and when we fall asleep, nothing of us shall be lost; our souls shall go to thee in paradise: And our bodies, though laid in the grave a while, as thine was, shall be raised up in glory at the last day. O give us that precious faith, merciful Saviour; give us by thy almighty

Spirit that true faith in thee which is the instrument of all this blessedness.

Thou art the living bread which came down from heaven, of which if any man eat he shall live for ever: And the bread that thou givest is thy flesh, which thou hast given for the life of the world. Lord, grant us to eat thy flesh and drink thy blood, otherwise we have no life in us. Grant us to eat thy flesh and drink thy blood, and we have eternal life, and thou wilt raise us up at the last day: For thy flesh is meat indeed, and thy blood is drink indeed. Grant us to eat thy flesh and drink thy blood, and we shall dwell in thee, and thou in us. Grant us to feed on thee, and we shall live by thee; as the living Father hath sent thee, and thou livest by the Father: Thou art that bread of life, that bread that came down from heaven: Not as the Israelites did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead: He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

The Jews murmured because thou saidst, "I came down from heaven;" but they were soon to see thee ascend "back into heaven." They thought it a hard saying, that the eating thy flesh and drinking thy blood was necessary to life. But when Paul was converted, he could say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Lord Jesus, give us to know by experience this true life: And may all the words which thou hast spoken to us be spirit and life to our souls, and quicken us more and more.

Verse 66 to 77. " Lord, to whom shall we  
" go, &c."

We trust thou wilt never suffer us to go away from thee. No, Lord, for to whom shall we go? Thou only hast the words of eternal life: And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God. Let us therefore live and die, and have our lot eternally with thee.

## C H A P. VII.

Verse 1 to 14. " Our Lord's answer to his  
" kinsman, bidding him go out of Galilee  
" into Judea, and shew himself to the  
" world."

Some of thy near relations did not believe in thee, and therefore they spake so indecently and presumptuously. There was a great difference betwixt them and thee. Their time was always ready, because they did not employ every part of it according to the will of God; but thy time was all laid out with perfect wisdom for the accomplishment of thy great work, and every thing done in its season. The world could not hate them, because they were worldly in their temper and conversation; but thee the world hated, and sought thy life, because thou testifiedst of it that the works thereof are evil. Give us, Lord, to follow thy example, and not to be surprized though the world hate us.

Verse 14 to 19. " The Jews marvelled at his  
" teachings."

When the Jews wondered at thy teaching, and said, " How knoweth this man letters, having



“ never learned ?” thou answeredst them, “ My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” Lord, teach us to do the will of thy Father, and then we shall know of every doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether men speak of themselves. And we shall also know whether they be true men by this ; if they seek not their own glory, but thine. O our divine master, may this be the sincere aim of thy poor servants in all their service.

Verse 19 to 25. “ The wickedness of the Jews, though they pretended great zeal for the law.”

Keep us from that blindness and perverseness which made the Jews, though they allowed circumcision on the sabbath, angry at thy healing on that day : And though they pretended to be very zealous for the law of Moses, yet not to scruple to transgress it by seeking to kill the innocent. O give us thorough honesty, impartiality, and uprightness, that we may never judge according to the appearance, but in every case may judge righteous judgment.

Verse 25 to 37. “ We know this man whence he is, &c.”

They said, “ We know this man whence he is.” But him who truly sent thee they knew not: but thou knewest him ; for thou art from him, and he hath sent thee. And, now, thou art gone to him that sent thee ; and where thou art, thither thy persecutors cannot come. O heavenly Father, give us to know thee the only true God,

God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent; and in a little while we shall follow our Saviour, and live with him in thy house above, out of the reach of all enemies.

Verse 37 to 40. "Jesus stood and cried."

In the last day of the feast, when there was a great concourse of people, thou didst stand and cry, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." We all naturally thirst after happiness: but, if we have not come to thee, this thirst has never yet been quenched. Though we have tried many ways, and drunk of many streams, all has been in vain. And now, after all we have done to provoke thee to give us up to wander in our own counsels, thou sayest to us in thy word, "Come unto me and drink." We come, Lord; O help us to come. Thou sayest, "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." We see, faith in thee is the great mean of obtaining all. Lord, hast thou not given us to believe that thou art the Son of the living God? And that thou art able and willing to save us? And hast thou not made us willing from our hearts to be saved by thee in thy own way? We will therefore look for thy Spirit to be poured upon us; thy Holy Spirit to sanctify us, throughout, and to fill us with love, peace, and joy. O how happy shall we be if thou fulfilllest our desires and hopes. Our souls shall be as a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not; that river whose streams make glad the city of God; that pure river of water of life, clear as chrystal, which proceedeth out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb, shall flow through our hearts, purifying, refreshing, and gladdening all that is within us.

O let it be thus with us, and with all our relations and acquaintances; yea with all mankind, infinitely gracious and almighty Saviour, to the glory of thy Father, thy own glory, and the glory of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Verse 45 to 53. "Never man spake like this man."

Lord, pity such as are prejudiced against thee by the unbelief of any who are esteemed great or honourable; or because thy disciples are despised. Blest be thy name, that some of us can from experience join with those who testified, "Never man spake like this man;" And know that the more thy words and doings are inquired into, the more their glory appears. O that all the world would, for their own sakes, give thee a fair hearing, and impartially inquire into what thou hast done!

#### C H A P. VIII.

Verse 1 to 12. "The woman taken in adultery."

Every man went to his own house; but thou wentest to the mount of Olives, to pass the night perhaps in a poor cottage, or else in the open air: yet early in the morning, thou wast in the temple again, teaching the people. Lord, keep us from sloth and effeminacy. Make us patient to endure hardships, and diligent in thy service notwithstanding. Thou wast interrupted in thy teaching by a pretended zeal against immorality, but a real intention to insnare thee. We adore that meekness and peaceableness which made thee be-  
have

have as though thou heardst them not. But since they would have an answer, blessed be that wisdom which silenced and confounded them. Thus let it fare with all who contend with thee. But alas ! though they were ashamed, they were not truly humbled, otherwise they would have applied for pardon to him whose divine wisdom and authority had awakened their consciences. How much better did the guilty woman, who instead of flying out of thy presence, waited to hear thy will concerning her. Lord Jesus, we desire to take the same course. We are brought before thee by many accusers. The law says we are cursed, and deserve to die : and we acknowledge the justice of its sentence. But when we look to thee, thou sayest, " I do not condemn you ; go, and sin no more." Blessed be thy name, though thou hadst no sin ; though thou wast holy and undefiled, and separated from sinners ; yet thou camest not into the world to condemn, but to save : yea, to save the chief of sinners. Thou sayest, " I do not condemn thee ; go, and sin no more." In like manner, thou saidst to the impotent man, " Behold thou art made whole ; sin no more." Lord ! What is it to sin no more ? O give us what thou exhortest us to. Give us to be as free from all sin henceforth, as it is possible for human creatures to be, upon earth. We earnestly beg to be so. O hear us for thy name's sake.

Verse 12. " I am the light of the world, &c."

O uncreated light, far more sweet, beautiful and reviving, than the light of the sun ; shine upon our minds, and we shall be happy. Make us to follow whithersoever thou ledest. What is it, Lord, to follow thee ? Is it not to believe



thy doctrines, to observe thy precepts, and to imitate thy example? O cause us to follow thee in all these, and if there be any other way in which thou wouldst have us to follow thee, graciously discover it. O cause us to follow thee fully. So we shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The light which thou givest is life; and the life which thou givest is light. Blessed light! which will guide through this wilderness, and through the valley of the shadow of death, and lead us to heaven, where it will shine more gloriously. Blessed life! which diseases, age, afflictions, cannot impair, and which at the death of this body shall be perfected. O give us this light and this life.

Verse 13 to 20. "He answers the Jews who  
"objected against his testifying of him-  
"self."

Though thou barest record of thyself, yet thy record was true; for thou couldst say to thy adversaries, "I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go." They judged after the flesh, but thou judgedst no man. And yet if thou hadst judged, thy judgment would have been true, for thou wast not alone, but thou and the Father that sent thee. It was written in the law of Moses, that the testimony of two men is true. Thou wast one bearing witness of thyself, and the Father that sent thee, bare witness of thee. O how miserable were they who neither knew thee nor thy Father: If they had known thee, they would have known thy Father also. Lord Jesus! Give us to know thee. We desire to know nothing else. All else is but vanity. We beseech thee,

shew us thy glory. Blessed be thy name, for opening some of our eyes to see something of it. O give us to know thee more. May we be strangers to our most intimate friends in comparison of thee.

Verse 21 to 37. "If ye believe not that I am  
" he, ye shall die in your sins."

Thou saidst to the wicked Jews, "Ye are from  
" beneath, I am from above : Ye are of this  
" world, I am not of this world : I said there-  
" fore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins :  
" for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die  
" in your sins." We bless thee, Lord, for giving  
any of us to believe that thou art he, that thou  
art the light of the world, the promised Messiah,  
the Son of the living God, the Word who was in  
the beginning with God, and God blessed for  
ever. O strengthen our faith more and more.  
Thou hadst many things to judge and to say of  
these hypocrites ; but he who sent thee was true ;  
and that was not the time of judging them ; but of  
speaking to the world those things which thou  
hadst heard of him. Thus thou dost still by the  
instrumentality of thy servants. O that sinners  
may hear and believe, and act as they shall have  
cause to wish they had done, when the time of  
judgment comes.

It is said, many believed on thee, as thou  
spakest these remarkable words, " When ye  
" have lift up the son of man, then shall ye know  
" that I am he, and that I do nothing of my-  
" self ; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak  
" these things : and he that sent me is with me :  
" the Father hath not left me alone ; for I do always  
" those things that please him." How visibly  
were

were these words fulfilled after thy death! And when they were delivered, the truth seems to have broke through the prejudices of many of thy hearers. They seem to have felt that thy words and works were divine, and that it was an undeniable truth that thou didst always the things that pleased God. On this occasion, thou saidst to them, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Lord, give us to continue in thy word, and to know the truth. We bless thee that thou hast brought any of us daily to meditate on thy words, and to set them before us, as the rule of our conduct. We trust thou wilt make us know the truth relating to thy glory and our salvation, and that the knowledge of this truth shall make us free from the slavery of sin. Thou art the truth. O make us to know thee more. Thou canst, and we hope thou wilt deliver us from this slavery. The Jews boasted they were the children of Abraham, and were never in bondage to any: But we acknowledge, Lord, we have been vile miserable slaves to divers lusts. O make us free. Thou hast said, "He who committeth sin is the servant of sin." O deliver us from this cruel bondage. How comfortably didst thou speak concerning thy people of old; "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: And ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." O almighty and most merciful deliverer! save us from this far worse bondage of the mind. O Son of God, bring us into  
that

that sweet and glorious liberty which thou givest. Then shall we be free indeed ; we shall do the will of our heavenly Father with delight, and dwell in his house for ever. Blessed and glorious liberty ! preferable to a thousand kingdoms.

Verse 37 to 48. " The blindness and hardness of the unbelieving Jews."

They pretended to be the children of God, while they hated thee his perfect image, and would not hear the truth which thou hadst received from God. They pretended to be the children of God, while they were indeed the children of Satan, and would do the lusts of that wicked one who was a murderer from the beginning ; and when he speaketh a lie, speaketh of his own, being a liar and the father of it. Therefore they sought to kill thee, and would not believe thee telling them the truth. None of them could convince thee of sin, nor of speaking any thing but the truth, yet would they not believe thee. Dreadful state of mind ! Lord, pity and give repentance to all who are now under the power of such impiety, falshood, and malevolence ; and save us from being in the number. Destroy out of our hearts every seed of these hellish dispositions of murder and lying ; and renew us by thy Spirit after the image of thy Father who is light, and love. And may we understand thy Speech, and hear with joy thy words, which are the words of God. May they be sweeter and more precious to us than all earthly delights !



Verse 48 to 59. "The blasphemies of the  
"Jews against Jesus."

We adore thee humbling thyself to suffer these abominable blasphemies ; and rejoice that thou art now worshipped as the true God in earth and heaven. Thou didst not seek thy own glory. Thou didst not honour thyself : but thou honouredst thy Father, who therefore honoured thee, and sought thy glory, and judged thy enemies. We believe, Lord, if a man keep thy saying, he shall never see death, but his dissolution shall be an entrance into a blessed immortality. O increase our faith, and give us to keep thy word.

Thou couldst say to thy adversaries, "It is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say that he is your God : yet we have not known him ; but I know him : and if I should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you : but I know him, and keep his saying." O Son of God, give us the knowledge of thy Father ; and cause us after thy example, and in thy strength to keep his saying ; and when he is pleased to make himself known to us, let us not deny his grace.

We adore thee as greater than the patriarchs and prophets, yea than all creatures : as the infinite, eternal, unchangeable God, whose name is "I AM."

Abraham rejoiced to see thy day. How ought the children of Abraham to rejoice, that thy day is now actually come : and, that all the parts of thy humiliation on earth being fulfilled, thou art now exalted at the right hand of God.

O let

O let the thoughts of this fill our souls with heavenly joy!

## C H A P. IX.

“The man born blind is restored to sight.”

Thy enemies sought to stone thee as a blasphemer, but it was not in their power to put thee to this kind of death; nor to kill thee at this time: Nor could they hinder thee, while thy life continued, from doing good. May we ever remember these words of thine, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Lord, give us humbly to imitate thy glorious example. When thou spakest these words, it was not long before thy death. How long it may be to ours, thou only knowest. O give us grace to work thy works, while it is day, and to have our light shining before men, that they may glorify thy name.

Let us not, with the disciples, be hasty in judging defects or diseases of any kind, to be the fruits of extraordinary sin: Such things, thou hast taught us, may be ordered for the glory of God, and for the good of the sufferers. Grant also, merciful Saviour, that the consideration that some sins entail diseases upon posterity, may have a due influence on parents, to restrain them from wickedness.

Teach us, Lord, what thou wouldst have us to learn from this miracle wrought on the man born blind. Thou didst not wait till he applied, but prevented him with thy mercy. Thou couldst have cured him without any means; but it is  
said,

said, "Thou spat on the ground, and made clay  
"of the spittle, and anointedst the eyes of the  
"blind man with the clay." We know not,  
Lord, what further might be meant by this action  
of thine: If it be necessary that we should know,  
thou canst teach us: But one thing we learn  
from it, that thou canst make the most im-  
probable means successful when thou plearest: And  
that every thing that comes from thee has virtue  
in it. Thou saidst to the man, "Go, wash in the  
"pool of Siloam, (which signifies sent, as thou  
"wast sent by thy Father); and he went his way  
"and washed, and came seeing." Lord Jesus!  
thou knowest, our souls are naturally blind; O  
anoint our eyes with thy eye-salve; and wash us  
in the fountain of thy precious blood; and we  
shall enjoy spiritual sight, which is far better than  
the sight of the body.

Thou didst this and many other miracles on the  
sabbath. Surely it must be right to do works of  
mercy on that day.

Thy providence made the unbelief of the Jews  
instrumental in confirming the truth of this  
miracle. They were at the utmost pains to sift  
it; not, alas! from an impartial desire to know  
the truth, but from prejudice against its author.  
They first examined the man, and then his  
parents, and then the man a second time, whom  
they would fain have prejudiced against thee.  
But all turned out to the confirmation of the  
miracle.

Glory to thy name, for thy goodness to this  
poor blind beggar! Thou openedst the eyes of  
his mind, as well as his body, and madest him to  
advance very quickly in knowledge and faith.  
At first he confessed thee to be a prophet; soon  
after he was not ashamed to own himself thy dis-  
ciple;

ciple; and at last he grew so bold as to maintain thy cause against the learned scribes. Out of the mouth of babes thou canst perfect praise, to still the enemy and the avenger. Yet alas! they did not yield to the truth, but giving way to their resentment and pride, cast him out of their church. This, however, did him no real hurt. He was happier than before. For it is said, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Gracious Lord! Thou forsakest not them that stand up for thy cause. Thou seekest them to comfort them, and to perfect the work of faith in their hearts. How condescending and kind was thy declaration to this poor despised man! "Thou hast both seen the Son of God, and it is he that talketh with thee." Lord Jesus! dost thou not still talk with us in thy blessed word? And dost thou not say to us at this time, "Believest thou on the Son of God?" We believe, Lord! O help our unbelief. We worship thee. Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the king of Israel.

For judgment thou art come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. Lord, keep from thinking with the pharisees, "Are we blind also?" We know by sad experience that we were blind in the things of God; and we fear, it is but very dimly that we yet see. Blessed be thy name, for any degree of spiritual light thou hast been pleased to give any of us. Lord, open our eyes more and more.

In the mean time we would not be unthankful for what thou hast done for us. The blind man could say, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." O may we all by thy

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grace



grace be able to say, Whereas we could once live without prayer, now we cannot be happy without it : Whereas we once made no conscience of our thoughts, now it is otherwise : Whereas, once we did not make thy word the rule of our conduct, now we would examine every passage of our life by it. Yea, that whereas once we were wretched slaves to sin, now we are truly thy servants. Lord Jesus hasten our real, thorough conversion ; or be pleased to give us clear evidence that it is already past.

## C H A P. X.

Verse 1 to 30. "Jesus is the good Shepherd,  
"who laid down his life for his sheep."

Here, Lord, thou hast warned thy disciples to beware of teachers, who enter not by the door into thy fold. Such as enter not by thee, thou hast said, are hirelings, who care not for the sheep : when they see them in danger, they leave them, and flee from them, and suffer them to be scattered and devoured. They are thieves and robbers, who come not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. Lord, pity and pardon men of this character, and give them repentance ; and keep poor souls from being deluded by them.

And O thou great Shepherd, be pleased to raise up many faithful shepherds under thee, who, having come to God by thy mediation, and being well acquainted with true religion in their own hearts, and entering into the pastoral office by thy call, shall be heard and followed by thy sheep, and shall take particular care of them, calling them by their name, and leading them  
out,

out, and going before them in the ways of holiness.

Thy sheep, thou hast said, will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers: but they know thee, and they hear thy voice, and follow thee, and by thee they enter into a state of salvation, and go in and out, and find pasture. O take us among them, if thou hast not already done it. Our souls were long like lost sheep; but didst not thou graciously condescend to seek us, and bring some of us home? If it is not so, O let it be so now.

Praise to thee, thou good Shepherd! whose goodness knows no parallel or example; for thou laidst down thy life for the sheep. Thy Father knew thee, as thou knewest the Father; and therefore he loved thee, because thou laidst down thy life, that thou mightest take it again. No man took it from thee, but thou laidst it down of thyself. Thou hadst power to lay it down, and thou hadst power to take it again: this commandment thou receivedst of thy Father. Instead of coming to kill, and to destroy, thou camest that thy sheep might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly, though it was by the sword of the Lord of hosts awaking against thyself, and piercing thy own soul. All glory to thee!

Happy beyond expression are the sheep of thy pasture! Thou givest to them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of thy hand. Thy Father, who gave them thee, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of thy Father's hand. Thou hast said, "What man of you having an hundred  
" sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave

“ the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go  
“ after that which is lost until he find it ? And  
“ when he hath found it, he layeth it on his  
“ shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh  
“ home, he calleth together his friends and neigh-  
“ bours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for  
“ I have found my sheep which was lost.” Thou  
gatherest the lambs with thy arm, and carriest  
them in thy bosom, and gently leadeest those that  
are with young. How sweet are the promises of  
thy Father ! “ Behold, I, even I, will both  
“ search my sheep and seek them out, as a  
“ shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day  
“ that he is among his sheep that are scattered ;  
“ so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver  
“ them out of all places, where they have been  
“ scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I  
“ will bring them out from the people, and  
“ gather them from the countries, and will  
“ bring them to their own land, and feed them  
“ upon the mountains of Israel, by the rivers,  
“ and in all the inhabited places of the country.  
“ I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon  
“ the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be :  
“ there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a  
“ fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains  
“ of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will  
“ cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I  
“ will seek that which was lost, and bring again  
“ that which was driven away, and will bind up  
“ that which was broken, and will strengthen  
“ that which was sick. And I will set up one  
“ shepherd over them, and he shall feed them,  
“ even my servant David : he shall feed them,  
“ and he shall be their shepherd. And I the  
“ Lord will be their God, and my servant David  
“ a prince among them. I the Lord have spoken  
“ it.

“ it. And I will make with them a covenant of  
“ peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease  
“ out of the land ; and they shall dwell safely in  
“ the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And  
“ I will make them and the places round about  
“ my hill, a blessing ; and I will cause the shower  
“ to come down in his season : there shall be  
“ showers of blessing. And the tree of the field  
“ shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield  
“ her increase ; and they shall be safe in their  
“ land, and shall know that I am the Lord,  
“ when I have broken the bands of their yoke,  
“ and delivered them out of the hand of those  
“ that served themselves of them. And they  
“ shall no more be a prey to the heathen ; nei-  
“ ther shall the beasts of the land devour them ;  
“ but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make  
“ them afraid.” The meanest and weakest of  
thy flock have an interest in these promises, and  
have ground to say, “ The Lord is my shep-  
“ herd, I shall not want : he makes me to lie  
“ down in green pastures : he leadeth me beside  
“ the still waters. He restoreth my soul : he  
“ leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his  
“ name’s sake.”

And when death comes, they may sing with  
confidence, “ Though I walk through the val-  
“ ley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ;  
“ for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff  
“ they comfort me.”

And in heaven thou wilt continue to be their  
shepherd ; for it is said, “ The Lamb which is  
“ in the midst of the throne shall feed them,  
“ and shall lead them unto living fountains of  
“ waters.”

O most merciful Shepherd of Israel ! have mer-  
cy upon us. We want no more but to be a-



mong thy flock ; to hear thy voice, and to follow thee, and to feed in the pastures thou hast prepared for us. What joyful days shall we have with thee ! And in the time of storms and tempests thou wilt be our safe refuge. O let us not wander. We are weak, foolish creatures, and are in danger of being devoured by beasts of prey ; but while we are at thy hand we are perfectly safe.

Help thy servants, who feed thy flock under thee, to be faithful. May they warn them, and deal honestly with them ; declaring to them thy whole counsel, shewing them the path of duty, and pointing out errors, that they may avoid them. Lord, make them careful and watchful, remembering what thou hast said, " Lovest thou me ? Feed my sheep ; feed my lambs."

Thou hast said, " Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring." O bring them home. How long, Lord ! Hasten their conversion, and let all thy flock be gathered from every part of the world.

Verse 20. " The blasphemy of the Jews."

When thou thyself, blessed Lord, wast thus reviled, why should thy servants think to escape ? O give them all a sound mind, and to speak the words of truth and soberness ; and then, not to be discouraged, though they be called mad by the ignorant or the profane.

Thou saidst to the Jews, " Many good works have I shewed you from my Father : for which of those works do ye stone me ?" They answered, " For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Thou answeredst

sweredst them again, "Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?"

When they pressed thee to declare that thou wast the Christ, thou appealedst to thy works: here thou makest the same appeal, as to thy being God. Thou sayest, "I and my Father are one: and if I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him."

Lord Jesus, we see thy works (and we bless thee for it) are the works of God. To open the eyes of the blind; to make the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, the sick to be whole, the mad to be sober; to dispossess Satan; to forgive sins; to comfort the mourners; to change the ignorant, the carnal, the proud, the impious, the lustful, the passionate, the covetous, the cruel, into heavenly, humble, pious, chaste, meek, loving, merciful. These are thy works, and they are of the same nature with the works of thy Father. O may we be able to add the change wrought on our own souls. May this appear daily more and more to be the work of God!

## C H A P. XI.

"The resurrection of Lazarus."

How happy were Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus, to be the objects of thy love! This

was better than thrones and sceptres. Yet, they whom thou lovest may be sick, and die : for after thou hadst heard of Lazarus's sickness, thou madest no haste to his relief, but abodest two days still in the same place where thou wast. But this is our comfort, that as Lazarus's sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby ; so the sickness and dissolution of thy saints shall be for the same blessed ends.

Thou wast not afraid to go to Judea again, though the Jews of late sought to stone thee, because thou wouldst finish the work thy Father gave thee to do. Help us to remember thy example in this, and to make out our journey while it is day, and while we have the light. Alas ! that we have lost so much time. O teach us now what thou wouldst have us to do, and lead us, and strengthen us to run the race thou hast set before us.

Verse 11. " Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."

Thus thou spakest of a deceased saint. They are all thy friends, and the friends of thy disciples. It is another kind of friendship than what the world have to give : it makes them ready to lay down their lives for one another. How pleasing is it to hear from thee, that their death is a sleep ! Sleep is sweet and refreshing to the weary ; but the sleep of thy saints has this unspeakable advantage, that their souls are not in a state of inactivity and insensibility, as in natural sleep ; but have a glorious happiness in thy presence, which makes it far better for them to depart and to be with thee, than to have the highest enjoyments,  
even

even of a spiritual kind, in this life. How blessed are they who have thus fallen asleep!

Verse 15. "I am glad for your sakes that I  
" was not there, to the intent ye may  
" believe."

It made thee glad when thy disciples were to have their faith strengthened. O blessed Son of God, our Saviour, give us faith: give us more faith. Save us from presumption and self-confidence; but let us never think we can have too strong faith in thee. Thy power is infinite; so is thy mercy; and thy faithfulness is firmer than heaven and earth.

Thomas thought thou hadst said, "Let us go  
" where Lazarus is; i. e. Let us die also." Therefore he said to his fellow-disciples, "Let us  
" also go, that we may die with him." Such was his zeal at that time. Alas! why did he and all the rest, so soon after, flee from thee, when thou wast really about to die? Lord, give us constancy and resolution in following thee: and in whatever shape death shall come, may it be welcome for thy sake, to carry us where thou art. Give us, gracious Saviour, thy presence, and death will be nothing. Better to die with thee, than live with kings.

Verse 21. "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

What shall we learn from this conversation with Martha? She was persuaded of thy power to have prevented her brother's death, hadst thou been present; but does not seem to consider, that thou couldst as well have done it in absence. Her  
I faith



faith seems to rise higher, when she adds, "But  
 " I know, that even now whatsoever thou wilt  
 " ask of God, God will give it thee." Yet does  
 she not mention her brother's being raised to life,  
 thinking it, perhaps, a miracle too great to expect.  
 And even when thou saidst, "Thy brother shall  
 rise again," she understood it only of his resurrection  
 at the last day. Therefore thou rebukedst the  
 weakness of her faith, and directedst her to higher  
 and juster thoughts of thy divine power, by these  
 remarkable words: "I am the resurrection and  
 the life: he that believeth in me, though he were  
 dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and  
 believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou  
 this?"

Lord Jesus, we believe, help thou our unbelief,  
 that thou canst deliver from death by thy command:  
 that whatever thou askest of God, God will give it  
 thee: that thou art the resurrection and the life, by  
 whom the dead bodies shall rise out of their graves,  
 and dead souls are now raised to spiritual life: and  
 that the soul which believes in thee, is by this faith  
 raised from death to life, and thus living and believing  
 in thee, shall never taste of death eternal. And we  
 believe, that thou art the Christ, the Son of God,  
 which should come into the world. O almighty and  
 most merciful Saviour! give us a true faith of all  
 this, and increase our faith more and more.

Verse 28. "The Master is come, and calleth  
 " for thee."

How gladly would we have this whispered in  
 our ear, if thy work was done. And, if thou art  
 to call for us, and receive us to thyself at death,  
 O holy Saviour! how ought we to live now!  
 in

in what purity ! O make us holy in our whole heart. As soon as Mary heard thou wast come, and calledst for her, she arose quickly, and came unto thee. With the same alacrity may we un to meet thee through the gates of death. Thou knowest, that we would fain be delivered from all thy enemies in our souls : O by thy almighty grace destroy them, and make us in every respect what thou wouldst have us to be.

Verse 35. " Jesus wept."

May we humbly enquire, compassionate Lord, into the cause of thy weeping ? When thou weptst over Jerusalem, it was at the foresight of its dreadful calamities ; but here it is attributed to thy seeing the grief of Lazarus's friends. Dost thou not here give an example to weep with them that weep ? Forbid it, Lord, that ever we should be insensible of the sorrows of others ; or that we should ever think it unmanly to grieve and weep with the afflicted. Blessed be thy name for giving this evidence, among many others, of a humane, sympathizing heart. Can poor souls doubt, after this, of thy willingness to save them ? Glory to thy name for shewing so much pity. We trust thou wilt pity us. We have had parents, and brothers, and friends, whose pity we could confide in : thy pity is certainly greater than theirs ; far greater, and more constant : we will therefore entirely trust in it.

Verse 37. " Some of them said, Could not this  
 " man, which opened the eyes of the blind,  
 " have caused that even this man should not  
 " have died ?"

They never thought of thy raising him again to life ; and Martha spoke as if she would not have

have thee go near the dead body, because it was now in a state of putrification : but thou canst go beyond all human expectations.

Verse 39. "Take ye away the stone."

Thou wilt have us to use the means. Thou wilt not work a miracle to do what thou hast given men power to do in the ordinary way. Help us, Lord, to attend to this, and to make the proper improvement of it.

Verse 40. "Said I not unto thee, that if thou  
"wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the  
"glory of God?"

Thus thou rebukedst the weakness of Martha's faith. It is thy will we should believe. This is the way, thou hast said, to see the glory of God. O give us faith. We believe thy omnipotence, Son of God; we believe thy promise; help our unbelief.

Verse 41. "Father, I thank thee that thou  
"hast heard me."

Thou wast perfectly sure of thy Father's love, and his readiness to hear thee on all occasions; yet with eyes lifted up to heaven, thou thankedst him at this time for hearing thee, that the people standing by might for their own good believe thy divine mission. Since faith in thee is such an object of thy desire, Lord Jesus, give us to abhor all remains of unbelief more than ever.

Verse

Verse 43. "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth."

It is thus, O glorious Author of life, thou raisest souls dead in sin, by the powerful voice of thy word and Spirit. Didst thou not call us, Lord, when we were rotting in the abominable grave of corruption? If not, O be pleased to do it now. At best, many of us are still like Lazarus, bound and blindfolded with grave-clothes. O give command to loose us, and to let us go, that we may walk after thee with the joy of a Lazarus raised from the dead.

Verse 49. "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

Thus that wicked man urged the necessity of putting thee to death, though innocent, for the public good. Whereas, if he had persuaded them to live agreeably to thy doctrine, to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's, they might have enjoyed prosperity; but rejecting and killing thee, they brought upon themselves what they feared, in its most dreadful form.

Lord, keep us from that hellish policy which useth sinful means to promote any end, however specious; and convince all who are tempted to such courses, that they will in the issue prove foolish and hurtful.

Caiaphas prophesied. Yea, thou hast said, "Many will say in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? to whom thou wilt profess, I never knew you: depart from  
" me,



“ me, ye that work iniquity.” O save us from being in the number.

Caiaphas did not know what he said ; but it was a glorious and rejoicing truth, that one man was to die for the nation ; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Adored be the wisdom and philanthropy of the divine persons in this wonderful dispensation ! Strange, that it should be just to give an innocent person to suffer for the guilty ! that God should devote his beloved and only Son ! that the Son of God should devote himself to such a death ! and that all this should not only be consistent with justice, but the highest exaltation of it, and of mercy at the same time ! Blessed invention of eternal wisdom and love !

O put us among the children of God whom thou gatherest into one. Give us, by thy Spirit of adoption, with well-grounded confidence to call thy Father our Father ; and to be joined by faith to thee as our living head, and to all thy members, by that pure love which will make them dearer to us for thy sake, than mother, and sister, and brother.

## C H A P. XII.

Verse 2. “ Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.”

This is a picture of what thou dost to dead souls, after thou hast raised them from the grave of corruption. Thou makest them dwell with thee, and sit with thee at table. Thou feedest them upon thy body and blood ; and, at last, takest

takest them up to feast with thee at the marriage-supper in heaven.

Verse 20. "Certain Greeks came to Philip,  
"and desired him, saying, Sir, we would  
"see Jesus."

What shall we learn, gracious Lord, from thy words spoken on this occasion? Thou art glorified when men, from a sense of thy excellency, and of their own necessity, are desirous to come to thee. And the great mean of thy being glorified was thy death, which was necessary to the multiplying thy disciples, as the dying of a corn of wheat is to its bringing forth fruit. Thou also teachest us not to love our lives, for that is the way to lose them; but to hate our lives in this world, that we may keep them unto life eternal. Thou addest these most encouraging words: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also my servant shall be: and if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." How mean and poor is all the grandeur and glory of the world to this! O give us the honour of serving and following thee; let who will take all the rest.

Thy soul was troubled in the view of the dreadful death thou wast to die, inexpressibly more dreadful than all the torments of thy martyrs; so that thou prayedst, "Father, save me from this hour." But immediately thou addest, "For this cause came I unto this hour: Father, glorify thy name." The glory of thy Father was dearer to thee than all things; and thy Father glorified his name by glorifying thee: therefore there came a voice from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

Thy

Thy Father's name had been glorified in thy miraculous birth ; in thy preservation from the cruelty of Herod ; thy victory over Satan in the wilderness ; thy casting him out of the possess ; thy healing all manner of diseases ; thy raising the dead to life : and it was to be farther glorified by thy own death and resurrection, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit to subdue the world to thy cross. Unhappy are they who do not see God glorified by these great events.

Now this world was to be judged, and the prince of it to be condemned and cast out. He had long deceived the nations, and taught them idolatry, uncleanness, falshood, cruelty ; instead of which thou wast to bring upon the earth the spiritual worship of the true God, purity of heart, truth, mercy : and all nations were by a divine attraction to be drawn to thy cross. Adored be the wisdom and power of God, which triumphed over the violence and craft of the old serpent by such unlikely means. Blessed be thy name, who willingly gavest thyself to suffer such a death for the glory of thy Father, and the salvation of mankind. As thy prediction has been so remarkably fulfilled already, O grant that it may be so more and more. Draw unto thee all men that now live upon the face of the earth, O almighty Saviour !

Verse 35. " Yet a little while is the light  
" with you."

Lord, help us to take the advice thou gavest the Jews. Thou, the true light, art now with us. Give us to walk while we have the light, lest darkness come upon us ; for he that walketh in  
darkness,

darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. Keep us from the darkness of ignorance, the darkness of error, the darkness of sin. May we know thee, and follow thee, and we shall not walk in darkness: we shall know whither we are going; for thou hast said, "Where I am, there also shall my servant be." O heavenly Light, we believe in thee; help our unbelief. We would keep thee still in our eye, and follow whithersoever thou leadeft. Lord, make us children of light, having no fellowship with any work of darkness, but loving the light, and in all our behaviour, words, and thoughts, working none but the works of light. O that we had done so from our youth. Give us, Lord, henceforth to do it, and we shall no more be ashamed.

Verse 37. "But though he had done so many  
"miracles before them, yet they believed  
"not on him."

Save us from that blindness which hindered the Jews from understanding with their hearts, and being converted and healed. When thy evangelical prophet saw thy glory, and spake of thee, he complained, that few of that nation would receive thee. This is melancholy; but what follows is most joyful. "He shall see his seed; the  
"pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand;  
"he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall  
"be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my  
"righteous servant justify many." O that we, and all our friends and country, yea all mankind that now live upon earth, might be in that number.



Verse 42 to the end. "Nevertheless, among  
"the chief rulers," &c.

It is said, "many of the chief rulers believed  
"on thee, but did not confess thee, lest they  
"should be put out of the synagogue; for they  
"loved the praise of men more than the praise  
"of God." Save us from imitating them in  
this. May we believe in thee with our hearts,  
and confess thee boldly with our mouths. Let  
us never be ashamed of thee, or of thy words,  
before a wicked and adulterous generation. What  
is it to us whether men praise or condemn, if  
thou, the Judge of all, approve? O make us  
to know from thy blessed word, in every instance,  
what is approved by thee.

"He that believeth on thee, believeth on him  
"that sent thee: and he that seeth thee, seeth  
"him that sent thee. Thou art come a light  
"into the world, that whosoever believeth on  
"thee, should not abide in darkness." Give us  
to believe on thee, and to keep thee continually  
in our view.

"If any man hear thy words, and believe not,  
"thou judgest him not; for thou camest not to  
"judge the world, but to save the world. He  
"that rejecteth thee, and receiveth not thy words,  
"hath one that judgeth him: the word that  
"thou hast spoken, the same shall judge him in  
"the last day. For thou didst not speak of thy-  
"self, but the Father which sent thee, he gave  
"thee a commandment what thou shouldst say,  
"and what thou shouldst speak; and his com-  
"mandment is life everlasting." May we there-  
fore receive thy words as spoken to thee by thy  
Father. Blessed words of life, spoken by the Son  
of God to men with a human voice, but first  
given

given by the Father to the Son. O how far superior to the wisdom of men, lo! Teach us, Lord, by thy divine Spirit, rightly to understand them; to love them with our heart; to keep them in our memory; to meditate upon them; to observe them as the rule of our whole conduct: so shall we never be ashamed. We are to be judged by them at the last day: if they absolve us now, they will not condemn us hereafter.

## C H A P. XIII.

Verse i. "When Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father—"

Though the death thou wast to die was most terrible, yet was it a departing out of this world unto the Father. The same privilege thou hast purchased for all thy followers. Death, in whatever form it comes, takes them out of this evil world, this world of temptation and sin, this vain, this troublesome world, this world which was so unkind to their master; and it carries them to thy Father, and their Father. O happy change.

Verse i. "Having loved his own—"

Blessed are they who are thine, thy own, thy subjects, thy servants, thy disciples, thy friends, thy family, thine by the gift of the Father, thine by thy own choice, thine by their self-dedication, the purchase of thy blood, the members of thy body, one spirit with thee. What multiplied and strong ties are here! How intimate an union!

Lord Jesus make us thine. Let us not be miserable slaves of sin, or satan, or the world, or self. Let us be only, and wholly, and unalterably, thine.

Verse 1. "He loved them to the end."

Blessed be that love which took its rise from eternity: That love which is stronger than death, which cannot be quenched by many waters, which cannot be drowned by the deepest floods. All the impiety and ingratitude of mankind, for four thousand years, did not hinder thee from assuming their nature at the appointed time. Nor was it weakened in the least degree by all the contradiction, persecution, contempt, hatred, treachery, cruelty which thou sufferedst from them in thy life and death. Still it brake out and flamed, conquering all opposition. It prayed for thy enemies when they were murdering thee. And in heaven it makes intercession for them, that they may be converted and saved: nor will it cease till it bring them to glory. O God of love, how great is thy love to unworthy and unthankful men. Let heaven and earth praise thy blessed name.

Verse 2. "The devil having now put into the heart of Judas to betray him."

It appears from this, that the devil puts horrid designs into the human heart. O merciful Saviour, who camest to destroy the works of the devil, and deliver us from his power. But how shall we know what comes from him; that we may be filled with horror at the first thoughts of it? Thy word says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil."

“ devil.” Whether therefore the temptation come from our own lusts, or from Satan working with them, if we comply with it, we shall serve that wicked spirit. Save us then from entertaining the first motions to sin, but with horror. And as Satan is described in thy word, an unclean and proud spirit, a liar and a murderer; and Judas is stigmatized as a thief, and covetous, and a hypocrite; may we have a particular horror at all these kinds of wickedness. O let none of these serpents grow in our hearts. Crush them in the egg. How it makes us shrink to consider that we have so much of the brood of the old serpent within us! Son of God, hear our cry, and deliver us.

Verse 4. “ Jesus riseth from supper, and washeth  
“ his disciples feet.”

Though thou knewest that the Father had given all things into thy hands, and that thou wast come from God and went to God, yet didst thou humble thyself to perform this servile office. What shall we think of it? Peter was surprized, and rashly said, “ Thou shalt never wash my feet.” But when he had heard thee say, “ If I wash thee  
“ not, thou hast no part with me;” he soon retracted. Lord, be pleased to teach us the great lessons this singular action of thine was intended to give. First we see that herein thou hast set an example to thy disciples, that as thou their Master and Lord washed their feet, they ought also to wash one another’s feet. Some, we find, have understood this literally. Lord, shew us how it ought to be understood. Certainly the least it can mean is, that after such an example we should not think it below us to perform to the least of thy



thy disciples the meanest services. Again we see there is something of a spiritual nature meant by washing; for thou sayest, "Ye are clean, but not all." And afterwards, "Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you." And it is said in other places, "that thou sanctifiest and clearest thy church with the washing of regeneration," and "wastest them from their sins, in thy own blood." In like manner it seems we ought to understand what thou sayest here. "He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." But what is this spiritual washing of the feet? Is it not, Lord! that those who have been washed, and justified, and sanctified in thy name, and by thy Spirit, at their first conversion, should yet seek to be daily washed from the guilt and filth they contract by journeying through this evil world. Lord, grant that we may indeed be in a washed and cleansed state, and that we may daily make fresh application to the fountain of thy blood; the promised influences of thy Spirit; the purifying promises and precepts of thy word; and may have our ways cleansed thereby.

Verse 7. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Many of thy dispensations we do not know the meaning of; but it becomes us to wait patiently, till thou shalt be pleased to explain them. We do not see how any good can come out of these things; but by thy grace we will go on in the way of prescribed duty: thou canst make us see it hereafter.

Verse

Verse 13. "Ye call me Master and Lord;  
"and ye say well, for so I am."

Blessed Master! Gracious Lord! How delightful is it to call thee by these names! May we have a true zeal for our master's honour, and be faithful in thy service, according to the talents committed to us. Give us grace both to know and to do thy will. And let us not be ashamed to imitate thy divine lowliness, which humbled itself to serve its own servants.

Verse 18. "I know whom I have chosen."

Blessed be thy name, that when it appears thou hast chosen any to believe thy gospel; to be converted from idols to serve the living God; to resemble and follow thee, and to wait for thy coming from heaven; these are sure signs that thou hast chosen such persons to everlasting life. O give us, therefore, to see the certainty of our election, by the certainty of our calling; and to see the certainty of this, by the graces of thy Spirit flourishing in our hearts. May we add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. Let us not be satisfied with our condition, while these are wanting. And when we can see thou hast bestowed them upon us, may we rest assured of our election, by thy free, unmerited, adorable grace. Blessed be thy name for choosing any of the sinful posterity of Adam. Blessed be thy name, that all the fruits of election are freely offered in thy gospel to every human  
S 4 creature.

creature. And blessed be thy name, that when any are enabled to believe in thee, they may assuredly gather that thou hast elected them to everlasting life.

Verse 21 to 33. "Jesus was troubled in Spirit."

It is said thou wast troubled in Spirit, when thine enemies buffeted thee, and spit in thy face; but thou wast troubled in Spirit, that one of thy apostles should betray thee. O keep us from every degree of this hell.

What are we to think, blessed Lord, of these words spoken by thee to the traitor, after Satan entered into him, "That thou doest, do quickly." Surely thou didst not approve of what he was doing: but when thou sawest the hellish plot coming to the birth, and shewedst by these words, that thou wast not afraid of him, or of Satan, who had now got possession of him, but wast resolved to suffer all that the scriptures had foretold. Blessed be thy constancy and patience! O save us and all men from giving place to the devil. He first put it into the heart of Judas to betray thee; and then he entered into him, and completed the wickedness.

When the traitor was gone out, thou saidst, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Thy ignominious death, brought about by the treachery of one of thy apostles, was to be the great means of thy glory. Adored be that wisdom which knew how to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil. Thy Father, whom thou always glorifiedst, was also eminently glorified by thy death: and he glorified thee at that time in the midst of all thy sufferings; and

and in three days raised thee from the dead, and soon after received thee up to heaven, to enjoy that glory with himself, which thou hadst with him before the world was. Let our hearts ever rejoice at the thoughts of thy glory.

Verse 34, 35. " A new commandment I give  
" unto you, that ye love one another, as I  
" have loved you, that ye also love one  
" another. By this shall all men know  
" that ye are my disciples, if ye have love  
" one to another."

Gracious Saviour! when we read these words, we cannot but conclude, that to love thy disciples is one of the greatest marks of true christianity. Our only difficulty is to know who are thy disciples indeed, that we may show our love to them. For, if we may use the words of Peter, " Thou who knowest all things, knowest that we do love them." But how shall we know them? Is it not by such marks as these; their making thee all their hope; looking for pardon only through thy blood; and justification only through thy righteousness; and hungering and thirsting after inward righteousness from thy holy Spirit; studying to follow thee daily, not conforming themselves to the world, but to thy blessed pattern; and longing to be where thou art. Give us, O loving Redeemer, to love all such persons, even as thou hast loved us; to be ready to lay down our lives for them. This is thy commandment, thy new commandment. O that all thy disciples may ever remember it, and what obligations they are under to observe it.

Verse



Verse 36. "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

Thou knewest that Peter had not courage to follow thee at that time, and that, notwithstanding his vehement protestations to the contrary, he would soon fully deny thee; yet thou knewest also, that thou wouldst not suffer his faith to fail altogether; yea, that after thy ascension thou wouldst endue him with such measures of thy Spirit, as would make him chearfully die any death for thy sake: Therefore thou saidst, "Thou shalt follow me afterwards." How happy was he who had this promise from thy own mouth, and was honoured to die a martyr. Blessed be thy name, all thy disciples follow thee through death to heaven. Give us grace chearfully to follow thee through whatsoever death thou pleasest.

#### C H A P. XIV.

Verse 1. "Let not your hearts be troubled."

It is not thy will that thy disciples should be troubled in their hearts; though this often happens through various temptations, and the weakness of their faith. Thou knowest our frame, and pitiest us, and here thou prescribedst the true remedy against heart-trouble: "To believe in God, to believe also in thee." Is not this, not only to believe the being and perfections of the true God thy Father; but to trust in him, that all things shall work together for good to them that love him, and are called according to his purpose,

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pose, And to believe not only that thou art the Son of God, one with thy Father, the promised Saviour; but to believe that thou art able and willing to save us, and to receive and rest upon thee alone for the whole of thy salvation. O give us thus to believe, that our hearts may never be greatly troubled, come what will.

Verse 2. And thou addest, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you."

As if thou hadst said, "Be not discouraged, though I said unto you, whither I go ye cannot come at this time. You shall come afterwards. I go to my Father's house, to sit on his right hand: But there are mansions in his house proper for you also. If it were not so, I would have now told you with the same frankness, as I have told you, ye cannot go with me at present. But I go to prepare these mansions for you, and to prepare you for them by my intercession and my holy Spirit; and I will come back and receive you to myself, that ye may dwell with me for ever. I will receive your souls when ye die, and will come in due time, and raise your bodies, and take your whole persons along with me to heaven."

O blessed Redeemer! what need we care for any thing here, since this is the case? Art thou indeed preparing a place for us in the house of thy Father, and our Father? Art thou preparing a mansion for us; a glorious mansion of eternal peace, in which we shall have perfect rest, and enjoy the society of thy saints and angels, and with them have communion with thy Father, and with thee,

thee, and with the holy Spirit for ever? And is all this so near? within a few years, months, or days? O why should we be troubled about any thing that can befall us here below? Our only just ground of trouble or care, is, lest we should come short of this blessedness. We are sure thou art preparing it for all thy true disciples. But are we of that number? Lord Jesus Christ, make us such, upon any terms thou pleasedst. Teach us, Lord! Here we are ready (by thy grace) to receive the law from thy mouth. Not only to renounce all the sins of our unawakened state, but whatever wrong steps we have taken in religion. Only vouchsafe to shew us what are such: we are ready to undo whatever of this kind we have done, to retract whatever we have said or thought: only be pleased to teach us, and give us no peace till thou causest us to follow thee fully.

Verse 4. "Whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know."

The way thou wentest to glory, was by death; and it is in the same way all thine must go to it. Lord make us ready to die. And when thou callest us, help us to rejoice in the thoughts of going to thee. Take away, for thy name's sake, every thing that hinders our perfect confidence. Be what it will, Lord deliver us from it, by thy blessed Spirit.

Verse 6. "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

The first thing we are concerned to know about the way to happiness, is, that "Thou art the

“ the way.” Thou art the only mediator betwixt God and man. None can come to the Father but by thee. O give us access to thy Father, that we may know him to be our Father also, through thy mediation. We hope thou wilt do it, if thou hast not done it already. Heavenly Father, didst thou not bring us from a dreadful distance, to some nearness to thyself, through the Son of thy love? And didst not thou make us to hear thy paternal voice? O bring us nearer, and pity, pardon, and heal us, for his sake; and send forth thy Spirit into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Thou, Lord Jesus, art also the truth, and the life. Give us to know thee, and we shall be ignorant of nothing that we need to know. O truth, manifest thyself to us. O life animate us.

We adore thee as the express image of the Father. We acknowledge that he who seeth thee, seeth the Father. Blessed be thy name for any glimpse thou hast given us of thy divine glory. O make us to know thee more in thy blessed word, in thy glorious perfections, in thy truth and ways. We believe that thou art in the Father, and the Father in thee. We believe that thy words were not spoken of thyself, but from thy Father; and thy works were done by thy Father dwelling in thee. We believe upon thy own word, O true and faithful witness, that thou art in the Father, and the Father in thee; and we believe also for thy works sake.



Verse 12 to 24. " Verily, verily I say unto  
 " you, he that believeth on me, the works  
 " that I do, shall he do also, and greater  
 " works than these shall he do, because I go  
 " unto my Father."

How is this Lord ? Is it not, because thy disciples were to do, not only the works which thou hast done, but were to be instrumental in the conversion of many thousands in a very little time ; whereas few were converted during thy personal ministry ? And this was the consequence of thy going to thy Father, and sending the Holy Spirit : Glory to thee for making thyself of no reputation till thy sufferings were all fulfilled. And glory to thee for endowing weak men with such power from on high, and causing thy Gospel preached by them, to spread with amazing rapidity through the earth, in the face of the strongest opposition.

Here, gracious Saviour, is thy ample repeated promise to them that believe on thee ; " What-  
 " soever they shall ask in thy name, that wilt  
 " thou do, that the Father may be glorified in  
 " the Son. If they shall ask any thing in thy name,  
 " thou wilt do it." Lord, give us to believe on thee ; and teach us by thy holy Spirit what to ask. We would ask that thy glory may be promoted, and thy kingdom may come, and thy will may be done on earth, as it is in heaven : particularly with respect to our own Souls, and the Souls of our families, and friends, and acquaintance ; yea of all who now live on the face of the earth, who have not sinned the unpardonable sin. Lord, awaken us to see the absolute need  
 of

of a Saviour, and to seek him with the whole heart, and deny not thy grace earnestly sought. This we beg in thy name. Lord grant it, that the Father may be glorified in thee.

Thou hast said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Lord, help us to remember this; and also what thou hast further said on this subject: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and again, "If a man love me, he will keep my words:" and again, "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." O infinitely amiable Saviour, cause us to love thee above all things, and to keep thy sayings in our memories, in our hearts, and in our lives. How happy shall we be, beyond expression, when "beloved of thy Father and of thee," and enjoying his peculiar presence and thine in our hearts! For thou hast said, "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him:" and, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Come then, heavenly Father! Come, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God: Come, holy Spirit! and dwell in these hearts, and make them fit habitations for thy glory. And be not offended when we seek to keep up intercourse with thee, as dwelling with us, for thou sayest, "We will make our abode with him." Adorable condescension! It is impossible we can be solitary, or in want of counsel or comfort, when we have such heavenly company in our hearts. O infinite Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; we desire to prostrate ourselves before thee in the deepest humility and gratitude.

Verse 18 to 20. " I will not leave you comfortless or orphans," &c.

Thy disciples were poor destitute orphans when left by thee. What are we, if thou shouldst leave us? Blessed be thy name, thou hast said, " I will not leave you orphans:" and, " I will come to you. The world seeth me no more; but ye see me, because I live, ye shall live also." All thy members live by union with thee their head. O blessed life, which cannot be impaired by any bodily diseases or adversities whatsoever. Lord, give us this life, and enable us to say with thy apostle from happy experience, " I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And thou addest, " At that day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." How intimate! how mysterious! is the union betwixt thee and thy true disciples! Lord, destroy every thing in these souls that is not consistent with such a glorious and blessed privilege. If we are of those who " are in thee, and thou in them;" what more can be desired for holiness and happiness? O to be sure that is so indeed.

Verse 25, 26. " But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, he shall teach you all things."

Thou knowest what need thy disciples have of comfort, and of instruction and direction in this dark and miserable world: Therefore thou hast promised thy Holy Spirit to be their comforter, and their teacher, and guide. Glory be to him who condescends to perform these offices to such mean

mean and unworthy creatures. He is the " Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." But thou hast said, " Ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you : " and, " He shall teach you all things." And we find this promise belongs not to thy apostles only, but to all thy disciples ; for it said, " Little children, ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know all things." Lord, give us thy Spirit to teach us, that we may not be deceived in any thing, in which thy glory, or the salvation of our own or other souls is concerned. Heavenly Father, thou knowest this gift is more necessary to us, than bread is to a starving child. As we would not, therefore, refuse bread to any of our children ; we beg and hope, through Christ, thou wilt not refuse us thy Spirit : and may he guide us into all truth.

Verse 27. " Peace I leave with you ; my  
" my peace I give unto you."

Is not this that peace of God which passeth all understanding, which rules in the hearts of thy saints, and keeps them ? O give us this peace, that we may know thou art our friend, and thy Father is our Father, and may fear no evil : and whatever disturbs this peace, may we hate and shun it as our enemy. It is thy peace, Lord ; the peace which cost thee thy blood : a divine glorious peace, worth a thousand worlds. Give us this peace, and our hearts shall not be troubled, neither shall they be afraid, come what will. Let us not mistake carnal security for this peace. We beseech thee, Lord, let us not deceive ourselves. O give us peace of a right kind ; thy peace ; not as the  
T world



world, or Satan, or sin, or a feared conscience give; but thy own peace. Lord, do it.

Verse 28. "If ye loved me, ye would re-  
"joice, because I said, I go unto the Father:  
"for my Father is greater than I."

At other times thou saidst, "I and my Father  
"are one." How shall we reconcile these expres-  
sions? Lord, teach us. Is it not, that in thy divine  
nature thou art one with the Father; but as man,  
as mediator, thou art inferior to him. And here we  
are taught to rejoice, that after finishing thy Fa-  
ther's work, thou wentest to him to be glorified.  
Give us, Lord, to know the sincerity of that love,  
which we hope thou hast put in our hearts towards  
thee, by a real and sensible joy in thy exaltation.  
What though we be low, and poor, and despised?  
What though many of thy saints are in the same  
mean condition? Our blessed head is exalted, and  
set by his Father at his own right hand in the hea-  
venly places, far above all principality, and power,  
and might, and dominion, and every name that  
is named, not only in this world, but also in that  
which is to come: and hath all things put under  
his feet. Let us therefore amidst all our private  
troubles and disappointments rejoice in thy exal-  
tation.

Verse 29. "And now I have told you before  
"it come to pass."

These great things concerning thy death and  
exaltation, and the mission of thy Spirit, thou didst  
foretel, that when they came to pass, thy disciples  
might believe, Thou knowest the importance  
and

and necessity of believing. O give us true faith, and increase it.

Verse 30. "The prince of this world cometh," &c.

Satan, the prince of this world, came and instigated Judas to betray thee, and the Jews and Romans to put thee to death, though there was no cause. And no doubt he would have tempted thee to distrust thy Father, or to draw back, if he had been able; but there was nothing in thee for his temptations to take hold upon. Thou wouldst not sin; but thou patiently submittedst to suffer, because it was the will of thy Father, that the world might know thou lovedst the Father, and didst every thing according to his commandment. Adored be thy willingness and chearfulness in laying down thy life. "Arise, let us go hence:" As if thou hadst said, "I must not stay here any longer, I must go to the place where I am to be apprehended." All Glory to thee.

C H A P. XV.

Verse 1. "I am the true vine, &c."

Here we are taught that thou art the true vine, and thy Father the husbandman, and thy disciples are the branches of this vine. But there are two kinds of branches. Some who are not vitally united to thee, and therefore can do nothing; who do not abide in thee, and therefore do not bear fruit. Such thy Father taketh away, and they are cast forth, and are withered; and they are gathered, and cast into the fire and burned. Lord, save us from being in this number. There

are others who are vitally joined to thee, who abide in thee, and have thee abiding in them. These bear fruit; and thy Father purgeth them that they may bring forth more fruit. Their fruitfulness is not of themselves at all. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can they, except they abide in thee. Abiding in thee, and thou in them, they bring forth much fruit: but without thee they can do nothing.

How happy are such persons! Thou hast said, they shall ask what they will, and it shall be done unto them. And they are instruments in glorifying thy Father; and shew themselves to be thy true disciples.

O make us such. We are by nature branches of a barren useless tree, fit for nothing but the fire. Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, ingraft us in the true vine by faith and love, and purge us by thy cleansing word. Give us that living union with thy Son, by thy holy Spirit, that we may abide in him, and he in us. We cannot bear any fruit of ourselves; all must be derived from him. O make us to receive out of his fulness, grace for grace: for severed from him we can do nothing.

Cause us, Lord Jesus, to abide in thee by the continual exercise of faith and love; and do thou abide in us by thy Holy Spirit: and let thy words abide in us. And give us firmly to believe that while this is the case, we shall ask what we will, and it shall be done to us. O make us to bear much fruit, that thy Father may be glorified, and that we may be thy disciples indeed.

Verse 9. "As the Father hath loved me, so  
"have I loved you."

O marvellous condescension! Thou hast loved us with an eternal, unchangeable love, with a love that passeth knowledge. O may we continue and abide in thy love; being firmly persuaded of thy love to us, and full of love to thee, and having those dispositions of mind in which thou delightest. And that it may be thus with us, Lord give us grace to keep thy commandments, particularly that great and peculiar commandment of loving one another, as thou hast loved us. Thou keptst thy Father's commandments, and didst abide in thy love to him, and in his love to thee. O may we keep thy commandments, and abide in thy love.

Verse 11. "That your joy might be full."

This heavenly discourse to thy disciples before thy death, was spoken, that "thy joy might remain in them, and that their joy might be full." And that in thy intercessory prayer it is said, "These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." Be pleased to show us the meaning of these gracious words. It is evident thou wouldst have thy people to rejoice with a full joy. O deliver us from every thing that hinders this joy, and fill our hearts with it, and we shall pity instead of envying the false joys of the carnal and profane. It is also certain that thy Saints have a joy of the same nature with that which dwells in thy own blessed mind; and joy in God, and in the salvation of souls: and that thou hast a complacency and



joy in them. Lord, give us that divine joy in thy Father, and in thee, and in the blessed Spirit; and in the prosperity of thy kingdom. And keep us and all thy people from every thing that lessens thy joy and delight in us.

Verse 12 to 17. "The love that Christians ought to have to one another."

This is thy commandment; that we should love one another as thou hast loved us. Greater love than this hath no man, that a man should lay down his life for his friends. We are thy friends, thou hast said, if we do whatsoever thou commandest us. Thou callest us no more servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth: but thou hast called us friends; for all things that thou hast heard of thy Father, thou hast made known to us. We have not chosen thee, but thou hast chosen us, and ordained us, that we should go and bring forth fruit, and that our fruit should remain; that whatsoever we shall ask of the Father in thy name, he may give it us. And these things thou commandest us, that we love one another.

O gracious condescending God! who is like unto thee! And dost thou indeed call such unworthy creatures as we are thy friends? Lord, help us to behave in some degree answerably to this high relation. We know to whom to unbosom ourselves: surely there is no friendship on earth so intimate, so sincere, so cordial as thine. And shall we be unfaithful to such a friend? Forbid it, Lord. Let us have no will, no interests, no affections, different from thine.

Verse

Verse 18 to 25. "Encouragement against the  
"world's hatred."

Why should thy disciples be surprized if the world hate them, when they know that it hated thee before it hated them? And when thou hast told them, "If ye were of the world, the world  
"would love his own; but because ye are not of  
"the world, but I have chosen you out of the  
"world, therefore the world hateth you." May we ever remember thy words: "The servant is  
"not greater than the Lord. If they have per-  
"secuted me, they will also persecute you; if  
"they have kept my saying, they will keep yours  
"also. But all these things will they do unto  
"you for my name's sake, because they know not  
"him that sent me."

O how dreadful was the guilt of those, who, after seeing and hearing thee, and seeing thy divine works, hated thee! If thou hadst not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin; but now they had no cloke for their sin. If thou hadst not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now had they both seen and hated both thee and thy Father. And that word was fulfilled that is written in their law, "They hated me without a  
"cause." Lord, keep all who enjoy the light of thy gospel from such guilt.

Verse 26, 27. "The Spirit of truth shall tes-  
"tify of me; and ye also shall bear wit-  
"ness," &c.

Blessed be thy name: though thou art often re-  
jected by sinful dust, the Comforter, whom thou  
hast sent from the Father, even the Spirit of

truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he hath testified of thee, and still testifies. And as thy apostles, who had been with thee from the beginning, were thy witnesses in their generation; so thou hast in all ages many witnesses of thy divine power and grace. O increase their number daily.

## C H A P. XVI.

Verse 1 to 4. "These things have I spoken  
"unto you, that ye should not be offend-  
"ed," &c.

Let us not be offended when we see men who have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, excommunicating thy true disciples, and even thinking that in killing them they do God service. Thus thy apostles were treated; and they were forewarned of such treatment by thee, when thou saidst, "These things will they do  
"unto you, because they have not known the  
"Father nor me. But these things have I told  
"you, that when the time shall come, ye may  
"remember that I told you of them." Let us not stumble when we see thy words verified in similar instances.

Verse 4 to 7. "Because I have said these things,  
"sorrow hath filled your hearts," &c.

We adore thy pity and condescension in supporting thy poor weak disciples while thou wast with them, and in encouraging them when thou wast going away. It was not thy will that their hearts should be filled with sorrow at thy departure; but rather that they should enquire whither  
thou

thou wast going, and rejoice in the fruits of thy ascension, particularly the promise of thy Spirit. How little do men know what is expedient for them ! We have sometimes been ready to think it was a happiness above all other, to enjoy thy bodily presence upon earth, as the disciples once did ; but here thou sayest, " It was better for " them that thou shouldst go away, in order to " send them the Comforter." Lord Jesus, be pleased to send him into our hearts, that we may be supported, while it is thy pleasure to keep us in this valley of tears ; and though now we see thee not, yet believing in thee, may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Verse 8 to 12. " When he is come, he will re-  
" prove the world."

Thou sayest of thy Holy Spirit, " When he " is come, he will reprove the world of sin, be-  
" cause they believe not on me ; of righteousness,  
" because I go to my Father, and ye see me no  
" more ; of judgment, because the prince of this  
" world is judged." If it be thy will, we would  
beg to understand the full meaning of these words.  
We bless thee, that we understand them so far,  
that when thy Spirit was poured out at the day of  
Pentecost, many were convinced that thou wast  
the promised Messiah, and that not to believe in  
thee was a dreadful sin. And they were con-  
vinced, that though thou wast condemned and  
put to death by men, thou wast approved by God,  
and exalted to receive the promise of the Holy  
Ghost. And, lastly, it appeared by the great and  
sudden change wrought upon the world by his  
ministrations, that the prince of this world, who  
had contended with thee, was cast in judgment ;  
and



and that God had given thee power to overthrow his kingdom, to deliver mankind from his tyranny, and to destroy his works. Lord, make every one of us a subject of all the convictions of thy Spirit, which are necessary to true conversion, and to thy glory. May he shew us the evil of all sin, but especially of not believing in thee. May he shew us thy righteousness, as the righteousness of our risen Saviour, by which alone we can be justified : and may he give us an interest in it by true faith. And may he shew us the works of the devil destroyed in our hearts, and his power quite broken, and thy kingdom, O Righteous and Holy One, established and settled in us.

Verse 12 to 15. " I have yet many things to say unto you," &c.

In thy wisdom and compassion thou didst not reveal to thy disciples the mysteries of thy kingdom, farther than they were able to bear them ; leaving many things to the coming of thy holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, of whom thou sayest, " He will guide you into all truth ; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak ; and he will shew you things to come." We desire to receive whatever he taught thy apostles, with the same veneration as if spoken by thyself ; and to bless thee for the fulness of gospel light under his ministration.

Thou hast said, " He shall glorify me ; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Adored be that incomprehensible communion betwixt the persons of the  
the

the ever-blessed Trinity ! We bless thee that thy Holy Spirit glorified thee by taking of thine, and shewing it to thy apostles, and that we have the doctrines they preached in their writings. May he glorify thee in our souls, by enlightening us rightly to understand the sacred scriptures, and by giving us the experimental knowledge of these great and glorious things of thine, which are necessary to our salvation.

Verse 16 to 23. " A little while and ye shall  
 " not see me : and again a little while and  
 " ye shall see me," &c.

Thou informedst thy disciples that thou wouldst soon be removed out of their sight by death, which would make them sorrowful ; but in a little while thou wouldst see them again, and their heart should rejoice, and their joy no man should take from them. This was fulfilled at thy resurrection ; for we read, tht thy disciples were glad when they saw thee, and that they could hardly believe their eyes for joy. At thy death they wept and lamented, while the world rejoiced ; but their sorrow was soon turned into joy ; like a woman, who, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come ; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembreth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. Thus it was at thy resurrection from the dead ; thus it was in the day of Pentecost, when thy poor desolate disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. Is it not thus also, Lord, when the new creature is born ? and is it not thus, when, after a dismal night of inward trouble, thou, the Sun of righteousness, arisest on the soul ? And especially will it not be thus at death, when the dark and melancholy

lancholy passage opens into thy glorious presence ! O what joy will there be then ! O how will the hearts of thy disciples, after all their wounds and sorrows in this life, be filled with sincere thorough joy ! And this joy none shall be able to take from them for ever.

Verse 23, 24. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

We cannot but observe, Lord, a wonderful encouragement to prayer in these words ; especially when compared with what thou hadst said before : "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." Here are two glorious grounds of confidence ; "Thou wilt do it," and "The Father will give it." Thou wilt do it for the glory of thy Father ; and he will give it for his love to thee. When we hear this, and what thou farther sayest, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full ;" we cannot but wonder at our own stupidity, that we have not prayed more, and with more confidence ; and that any thing should trouble us, when we have such a resource. Hitherto we seem to have asked little or nothing in thy name ; now we will ask, as thou hast allowed and directed us. One scruple only remains, that this promise was perhaps made to the apostles about their asking and obtaining miracles in thy name. But this is removed by considering thy injunction of thy inspired apostle to the Christians in general who were at Philippi : "Be careful for nothing : but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests

"quests be made known unto God." Blessed be thy name for this glorious privilege.

Verse 25. "These things have I spoken to you  
"in proverbs," &c.

While thou wast upon earth, thou spakest mostly in parables; but after thy ascension thou shewedst thy disciples, by thy Holy Spirit, the things concerning thy Father plainly, and without a parable. Blessed be thy name for this increase of light. Help to improve it. O when shall we see thy face, and hear thy words in heaven, where the light will be still more glorious; where we shall not see thee as through a glass, or in a mirror, but face to face; where we shall not know in part, but shall know even as also we are known. O blessed day, when these words, "I will shew you plainly of the Father," shall have their full accomplishment.

Verse 26, 27. "I say not unto you, that I  
"will pray the Father for you."

As it is clear from many places of thy word, that thou makest intercession with the Father for thy disciples; we must understand the present expressions, as if thou hadst said, "I need not tell you that I will pray the Father for you; but I tell you farther, that the Father himself loveth you." Blessed news! and what thou addest, makes it sure to all who love thee, and believe that thou camest out from God. It is a certain sign that the Father loveth all such, because he hath given them to believe in thee, and to love thee; and he hath also a divine complacency in this faith and love. And now, Lord  
Jesus,



Jesus, forgive us if we speak wrong. Dost not thou know that we love thee, and that we believe thou camest out from God? May we not therefore conclude, that thy Father loveth us? This is happiness. O blessed be thy name for it.

Verse 30 to 33. "Now we are sure that thou knowest all things," &c.

We acknowledge, with thy disciples, that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any should inform thee of their desires or thoughts. With them also we believe, that thou camest forth from God. Alas! notwithstanding this belief, they soon forsook thee, and left thee quite alone for them; (yet thou wast not alone, because the Father was with thee.) Lord, keep us from deserting thee, or thy cause, in any wise; but, if we should, (which God forbid,) let not our faith wholly fail; but deal with us as thou didst with these disciples, whom thou mercifully forgavest, and blessedst with higher degrees of grace.

Thou concludest thy farewell discourse by saying, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. We must then look for tribulation in this world: we cannot expect freedom from it on this side the grave. But if thou wilt give us peace in thee; if thou wilt encourage us by the firm belief of thy victory over the world for thyself and thy followers; we shall not be greatly moved; yea, we will sing, "The Lord is our light, and our salvation; whom shall we fear? The Lord is the strength of our life, of whom shall we be afraid?"

## C H A P. XVII.

In this divine prayer we may observe,

I. The gesture. "Jesus lift up his eyes to heaven."

II. The appellations. "Father, Holy Father, Righteous Father."

III. The petitions. "Glorify thy Son. Glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

IV. Arguments from relation. "Thy Son."

V. Arguments from the season. "The hour is come; now I am no more in the world; I come to thee."

VI. Arguments from the work before him. "That thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him: and this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

VII. Arguments from what was past. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.—I have manifested thy name to the men which thou gavest me out of the world.—I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.—While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name.—I have given them thy word.—I have declared unto them thy name."

VIII. Intercessions for the disciples. "Keep them through thine own name, that they may be one, as we are.—I pray not that thou wouldst take them out of the world, but that thou

“ thou shouldest keep them from evil.—Sanctify  
 “ them through thy truth ; thy word is truth.—  
 “ That they all may be one, as thou, Father,  
 “ art in me, and I in thee ; that they also may  
 “ be one in us.—Father, I will that they also  
 “ whom thou hast given me, be with me where I  
 “ am ; that they may behold my glory which  
 “ thou hast given me.”

IX. Arguments in pleading for them. “ Thine  
 “ they were, and thou gavest them me ; and they  
 “ have kept thy word. Now they have known,  
 “ that all things whatsoever thou hast given me,  
 “ are of thee.”

“ They have received the words which thou  
 “ gavest me, and have known surely that I came  
 “ out from thee, and they have believed that  
 “ thou didst send me. I pray for them : I pray  
 “ not for the world, but for them which thou  
 “ hast given me, for they are thine.—And now I  
 “ am no more in the world, but these are in the  
 “ world.—And the world hath hated them, be-  
 “ cause they are not of the world, even as I am  
 “ not of the world.”—And again, “ They are  
 “ not of the world, even as I am not of the world.  
 “ —And as thou hast sent me into the world,  
 “ even so have I also sent them into the world.—  
 “ That the world may believe that thou hast sent  
 “ me.—That the world may know that thou  
 “ hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast  
 “ loved me.”

X. Manner of asking. “ Father, I will.”

XI. Declarations of important and interesting  
 truths. “ All mine are thine, and thine are mine,  
 “ and I am glorified in them.—Those that thou  
 “ gavest me I have kept, and none of them is  
 “ lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture  
 “ might

“ might be fulfilled.—These things I speak in  
 “ the world, that they might have my joy ful-  
 “ filled in themselves.—And for their sakes I  
 “ sanctify myself, that they also might be sancti-  
 “ fied through the truth.—Neither pray I for  
 “ these alone, but for them also that shall believe  
 “ on me through their word.—And the glory  
 “ which thou gavest me, I have given them ;  
 “ that they may be one, even as we are one. I  
 “ in them, and thou in me, that they may be  
 “ made perfect in one.—Thou lovedst me before  
 “ the foundation of the world. — O Righteous  
 “ Father, the world hath not known thee ; but I  
 “ have known thee, and these have known that  
 “ thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto  
 “ them thy name, and will declare it, that the  
 “ love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in  
 “ them, and I in them.”

Lord Jesus, make this heavenly prayer a blessed  
 portion of thy word to us. When we meditate  
 upon it, give it its full influence upon our faith,  
 our temper, our life, our prayers.

Verse 1. “ Jesus lift up his eyes to heaven—”

It becomes us with the publican not to dare to  
 lift up our eyes ; but we are exhorted in thy  
 blessed word to come boldly to the throne of  
 grace through thy blood and intercession : we  
 will therefore lift up our eyes to the heavens,  
 from whence cometh our help.

Verse 1. “ And said, Father—”

This is an affecting name ; thou, Lord Jesus,  
 hast taught us to use it. Abba Father ! We  
 have indeed sinned against heaven, and in thy  
 U sight,



sight, and are not worthy to be called thy children : yet still thou art our Father. Do with us what seems good in thy sight, our Father. Tho' thou shouldst slay us, we will cast ourselves upon thy fatherly mercy, made known to us by thy eternal Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Verse 1. " The hour is come ;—"

The hour of thy last sufferings, that dreadful and amazing hour is here meant. Yet (though there is no comparison) may we not also, after thy example, plead, " Father, the hour of temptation is come ; the hour of trial is come ; the " hour of death is come."

Verse 1. " Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also  
" may glorify thee."

We rejoice, O righteous Father, that thou didst glorify thy Son by carrying him through his dreadful sufferings ; by making his innocency, and even his divine glory, appear amidst the deepest humiliation ; by raising him from the dead, and taking him up to heaven, and giving him thy Holy Spirit to shed forth upon his apostles. We rejoice that he glorified thee so eminently in his death ; and that he glorified, and still glorifies thee, by giving eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. O give us this knowledge ; give us more of it ; and spread it over all the earth. Thou hast power over all flesh, and hast commanded thy gospel to be preached to every creature, with assurance, that he who believes shall be saved, and have eternal life. Yet thou givest eternal life  
only

Only to those whom the Father hath given thee. All that the Father hath given thee, shall come unto thee; but no man can come to thee, except the Father, which hath sent thee, draw him. Heavenly Father! thy ways and thoughts are far above the ways and thoughts of men; but, blessed be thy name, we know from thy faithful word, that thou art love; and that whatever short-sighted creatures may now imagine, thou wilt be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest. Here we will rest, and wait till that great day come. Praise to thee, that none are excluded, but such as exclude themselves. Glory, glory, for any evidences of thy having given our souls to Christ. O may they be more and clearer every day! Adored be thy free grace to worthless hell-deserving creatures!

Verse 4. "I have glorified thee on the earth."

Never was thy Father so much glorified upon earth, as by thee. Thou always didst the things that pleased him; and nothing but what pleased him. Thou finishedst the whole of the work he gave thee to do; therefore he glorified thee with himself, with the glory which thy divine nature had with him before the world was. O give us humbly to follow thy blessed example, by seeking to glorify God in all we act, speak, or think; and give us to finish thy work. Shew us what it is, Lord, and enable us to perform it.

Verse 6. "I have manifested thy name unto  
"the men which thou gavest me out of the  
"world."

Thy true disciples were men whom thy Father gave thee out of the world; they kept his word.

They knew that all things whatsoever he had given thee, were of him. They received his words which thou gavest them, and knew assuredly that thou camest out from him, and believed that he did send thee. O blessed Saviour, let it be thus with us ! Manifest thy name unto us, as to those whom thy Father hath given thee out of the world. Give us to keep his word. May we know, that all things whatsoever he hath given thee, are of him. Glory to thy name, that thou hast given us the words which he gave thee : may we receive them. May we know surely, that thou camest out from him ; and may we believe that he did send thee. We thank thee for any degree of this knowledge, faith, and obedience. O give us more.

Verse 9. " I pray not for the world."

Lord, teach us rightly to understand these thy words. Sometimes we think they may possibly mean that thou prayedst for thy disciples, as for those who were not the world, nor of the world, but persons of a very different character. But at other times we rather think they intimate that there is a number of men called the world, not given thee by the Father, for whom thou didst not pray. Thou prayedst for those whom thy Father had given thee. Thou prayedst also for all them who shall believe in thee. But these were given thee by the Father before their believing ; for thou sayest in another place, " No man can " come to me, except the Father draw him ;" and, " All that the Father hath given me shall " come unto me." So that, as thou givest eternal life to as many as he hath given thee, thou prayest also for as many as he hath given thee. Lord  
Jesust

Jesus! grant us to know, what thou wouldst have us to know on this subject. And if there be any thing in it above our comprehension, may we rest satisfied that it is agreeable to thy Father's name which thou hast declared. We bless thee that none have ground to despair, as if they were excluded from mercy, unless they wilfully exclude themselves; for it is said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." We bless thee also, that if we are made to believe in thee, we are sure we have an interest in thy prayers, and must conclude that thy Father hast given us to thee, and that we are his and thine; for all thine are his, and all his are thine; and thou art glorified in them. O be thou glorified in us, as in thy former disciples, by our believing in thy name, and forsaking all to follow thee, and continuing in thy word, and living suitably to it; and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, and willingly suffering all things for the advancement of thy kingdom.

Verse 11. "I am no more in the world, but these are in the world."

How affecting, and how comfortable is it to hear thee recommending thy disciples to thy Father; and pleading his interest and thine in them; pleading also their danger when left in an evil world; pleading thy former care of them; pleading thy pity and love to them; pleading their conformity to thee in not being of a present world; pleading the glory which thou hadst given them;



and pleading that for their sakes thou wast sanctifying thyself to be offered up a sacrifice for them. O give us humbly to imitate thy compassion and earnestness in praying for those whom we ought to have upon our hearts.

Verse 11. "Holy Father, keep them through  
"thine own name."

We see the nature of the blessings which thou askest for thy disciples. Thou askest not that they might be great, or rich, or powerful in this world: But, 1. That they may be kept, through thy Father's name, from the evils of the world: 2. That they may be sanctified: 3. That they may be one: 4. That they may be where thou art, and may behold thy glory. These blessings thou hast asked for all who shall believe on thee. We will therefore look for them; for surely thy Father heard thee.

Heavenly Father, be pleased to give us what thy beloved Son our Saviour hath asked. Keep us through thy name, O merciful and gracious, faithful and powerful Jehovah; keep us, whilst thou seest fit we should remain in the world, from the evil of it; for it is an evil world indeed; it does not know thee; and it hates the disciples of thy Son. O keep us from the world. Let us not be of it, as our Saviour was not of it. Let us not be conformed to it. Let us not love it. Keep us from it by thy name. Keep us by thy power; by thy wisdom; by thy mercy; by thy righteousness; by thy holiness; by thy truth. Let thy name be our strong Tower to which we may flee and be safe. Keep us (for thou allowest us to ask it) as the apple of the eye. O hide us under the shadow of thy wings, from the evil of this world.

Verse

Verse 17. " Sanctify them through thy  
" truth."

O Holy Spirit, sanctify us. Renew us after the divine image in knowledge, and righteousness, and holiness. God of peace, sanctify us wholly, and preserve our whole spirit and soul and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thou knowest thy beloved Son sanctified himself a sacrifice, that his people might be sanctified. O give us, then, this important blessing; and give us more of it daily. Make us to grow in conformity to him, who is both the pattern and source of our sanctification. May we receive out of his fulness, grace for grace. May we, after his example, be devoted to thy service. May our bodies be living sacrifices, holy and acceptable through him. And as it is by thy truth we must be sanctified, and thy word is truth, may we be more and more conversant in it, and receive suitable impressions from all its promises and threatenings, comforts and terrors, precepts and exhortations; and, in short, have our whole soul cast into its mold.

Verse 11 and 21. " Keep them, that they may  
" be one, as we are," &c.

Heavenly Father, make us one with all who believe in thy Son, by that intimate union which is far above human friendships and the ties of flesh and blood. What nearness! what oneness must this be! of which he says in his prayer, " That they may be one, even as we are one:" And again, " That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also

“ may be one in us :” And again, “ I in them, “ and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” And how much was it upon his heart, to have his disciples thus united, when he prays, “ Holy Father, keep them through thy “ name, that they may be one ;” and, “ I pray “ that they all may be one.” And when he uses these affectionate arguments, “ That the world “ may believe, and may know that thou hast “ sent me ;” and, “ may know that thou hast “ loved them, as thou hast loved me.” And when he declares “ The glory which thou gavest “ me, I have given them ; that they may be one, “ even as we are one.”

O heavenly Father, surely these prayers were heard. Why then have there been so many dissensions among professing christians ? We know not how to explain it. Either they have not been christians in reality ; but it is hard to think so of many of them ; or their disputes have not hindered the best part of their union. They only mistook one another, and were more united than they seemed to be. For, surely, Lord, if sincere christians knew one another, they would cordially embrace each other. Whatever be the case, we would mourn before thee, that there have been so many differences among them, and that their union has not been more visible to the world.

Remember, gracious Father, the dying petitions of thy well beloved Son, who always did the things that pleased thee. And grant that all his disciples may be perfected in one, as they have one faith ; one Lord ; one Father ; one Spirit ; one hope ; one divine nature, of which they all partake ; one heaven, in which they are to live for ever. O grant that they may love one another with that  
 dear

dear love, with which their Saviour loves them all.

But what shall they do, when they have different views of the meaning of thy word? Ought they not earnestly and affectionately to pray for one another, that they who are mistaken may be undeceived? Ought they not to inform one another with diligence and tenderness? Ought they not to forbear one another, and to wait patiently upon thee, for the success of their prayers and endeavours? And in the mean time join in declaring the great truths in which they are agreed?

O our Saviour, we would not join with any in their errors or mistakes; but we beg that all in whom there is found any good thing towards thee, may be delivered from every wrong opinion, and may know the whole truth necessary to salvation; and that thou wouldst give all that are thine, to walk with lowliness and meekness, with long suffering; forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

O separate them more and more from the world, and unite them more and more among themselves. And give them that love to one another, which thou hast so much inculcated and prayed for, that the world may take knowledge of them, and observe with wonder how they love one another.

Verse 18. "As thou hast sent me into the  
"world."

In praying to thy Father for thy apostles, thou sayest, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." And in another place thou sayest of thyself, "Him  
I  
"whom



“whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world.” It appears from these words, that as the Father consecrated thee by the Holy Spirit without measure, to the work of redeeming mankind, and of publishing thy salvation, and confirming it by miracles; so thou didst delegate thy apostles to carry on the publication of it, and endow them with thy Spirit in an extraordinary degree, for that purpose. And are not all thy true Ministers sent by thee, in so far as thou inclinest their hearts to thy work, and bestowest upon them suitable gifts, and bledest their labours? What an encouragement is it to such, that thou hast sent them, and that they have ground to think they are peculiarly interested in thy prayers.

Verse 22. “The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.”

Blessed be thy love! O how hast thou exalted guilty vile dust! As thy Father hath loved thee, so thou lovest them. As thou art the only begotten Son of God, thou givest them power to become the Sons of God. Thy Father giveth thee the Spirit without measure, and thou givest them the Spirit. Thou art the Lord and heir of all things, and thou givest them to inherit all things; thou makest them heirs of God, and joint heirs with thee. God is thy portion, and he is their portion. Thou knowest the Father, and thou revealest the Father to them. Thou art the light of the world, and thou makest them lights of the world. Thou art the great high-priest, and thou makest them priests to God, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable through thy merits. Thou art the king of Zion, and thou makest them kings. The Father hath given all things

things into thy hand, and thou makest all things to be theirs. The angels ministered to thee, and they minister to them also. Thou hast overcome the world, and by faith in thee they overcome the world. Thou art set down with thy Father on his throne, and thou makest them to sit down with thee on thy throne. O Son of God! How blind and infatuated are men who do not prefer this glory to all that is called great and glorious on earth! If this glory be ours, surely we ought not to complain under the greatest afflictions: yea we ought to rejoice and give thanks continually, and to behave with a heavenly dignity, at all times. Lord, give us grace so to do.

Verse 22. "That they may be one."

Thou hast given this glory to thy disciples, that they may be one, as the Father and thou art one. O why are they not more fully and intimately one? When shall the time come when all disputes and divisions among them shall entirely cease? Or if this is not to be expected in a present world, grant that they may come as near it as may be, that thy prayer may be fulfilled to the uttermost of what this mortal state is capable; as it will be perfectly fulfilled in heaven.

Verse 24. "Father, I will that those whom  
"thou hast given me, be with me where I  
"am."

Here is another wonderful expression of thy love: thy desire that all thine should be where thou art, and that they should behold the glory which thy Father hath given thee, who loved thee

thee before the foundation of the world. Indeed, Lord, this part of thy prayer is ground of great joy. For, to be where thou art, is one of the chief ingredients of heaven : and to behold thy glory is no less. And both are much increased by the thoughts of the pleasure thou takest in the company of thy saints, and in their beholding thy glory which thy Father hath given thee.

Why should we be uneasy when this desire of thine is fulfilled in the death of any of thy saints ? Ought we not rather to rejoice ; at least to have joy far superior to grief on such an occasion ? And why should our own death appear otherwise than most desirable, if such is to be the blessed consequence of it ? O what a glorious day will it be which brings us where thou art, to behold thy glory ? The pleasantest day we ever saw upon earth, cannot give us a faint idea of it. Lord, make our interest in thee sure, and give us to know that we are thine, that we may have continual cause to rejoice in this blessed hope !

O righteous Son of God ! The world knoweth not thy Father, but thou knowest him, and thine know that he hath sent thee. Praise to thee for declaring his name to them, and continuing to declare it, that the love wherewith he hath loved thee, may be in them, and thou in them. For is not this, that they having thee dwelling in them, may be objects of the same love wherewith the Father loveth thee ? O inconceivable blessedness ! Lord, make us sharers in it. Make us truly to know that the Father hath sent thee. And be pleased to declare his name to us more and more, that the love wherewith he hath loved thee, may be in our souls, and thou in them.

## C H A P. XVIII.

Verse 1. "He went forth with his disciples  
"over the brook Cedron."

David went over this brook in his flight from Absalom, when Achitophel, a type of Judas, was among the conspirators. But instead of fleeing from thine enemies, thou wentest to thy usual place of retirement in order to meet them.

It was a garden. The first Adam sinned in a garden, and afterwards sought to hide himself among the trees of the garden from the divine presence. Blessed be the second Adam, who in a garden began to expiate his rebellion, and voluntarily presented himself a victim to divine justice.

Strange! that Judas should come against thee with an armed force, and with lanterns and torches, as if any human power could have apprehended thee against thy will. Surely he might have known better, or perhaps it was to satisfy those who had bribed him, that no means were wanting on his part to apprehend thee. Whatever was the cause of it, it was part of thy deep humiliation. Glory to thy name for bearing it with heavenly patience.

Verse 5. "Jesus saith unto them, I am he."

Thy bloody agony being over, thou wentest out of the garden to meet thy enemies, knowing all things that should come upon thee, and saidst unto them, "Whom seek ye?" When they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth;" thou repliedst, "I am he." These words struck them to the ground.



ground. Upon another occasion thou spakest to thy disciples in the same words, "It is I, or I am he;" which was great comfort to them. But to hear, "it was thou," filled thine enemies with stupifying terror. Yet they persisted in their wickedness, as if they had been flocks or stones: for beasts would have run off after being thus struck. What will not men do when they are given over to a reprobate mind? Merciful Father, save us from every thing that leads to it.

Verse 8. "If ye seek me, let these go their way."

Thou didst again, O blessed Jesus! challenge thine enemies, and freely put thyself into their hands. At the same time, thou wouldst not suffer them to touch thy poor disciples, who had not, at present, strength for such a trial. "If ye seek me, let these go their way." Thus thou fulfilledst thy own words. "The hireling seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth; but I am the good shepherd, who giveth his life for the sheep!" And, "Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none." How safely may the meanest of thy flock trust themselves to thy love, O merciful and faithful Redeemer!

Verse 11. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

Help us to remember these words in the day of trouble. Lord, give us the same mind that was in thee. Give us the Spirit of adoption towards thy Father, that we may with faith call him our Father. And give us chearfully to drink every  
cup

cup he pleases to put into our hands. Glory to thee, for drinking that cup which all the creatures in heaven and earth could never have drunk. Thou hast hereby taken every drop of poison out of the afflictions of thy people. Whatever cup, therefore, our heavenly Father giveth us, may we drink it without reluctance or fear, knowing who gives it, and that it will not hurt us.

Verse 19. "The high priest asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine."

Thou couldst say, when interrogated concerning thy doctrine, "I spake openly to the world: "In secret have I said nothing." What thou spakest to thy disciples privately, thou commandest them to preach upon the house tops. Thy doctrine, Lord, needs no concealment or disguise. It loves the light, for it is the truth itself. May we ever openly and boldly profess it without fear of man. Let them be ashamed who deal in the doctrines or practices of darkness, or in their own erroneous or foolish imaginations. May we keep by thy doctrine, O Son of God, and we shall never be ashamed.

Verse 22. "Jesus is struck by a servant."

What indignity! But by this stroke souls that deserved to be struck with double stripes are healed. If at any time we suffer wrong, let us not be impatient when we remember thee. Men think it an unworthy thing to put up an affront: Thou, O Son of God, saidst only, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" Lord, give us of thy meekness, and we shall be more than conquerors

querors over all the malice and contempt of hell.

Verse 28. " They went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled."

Save us from every degree of this blindness and perverseness which made these people so careful not to be ceremonially defiled, while they scrupled not to shed thy blood. O give us a well-informed and tender conscience, regarding all thy commandments, and giving each its own place, the place which thou hast given it.

Verse 30. " They answered, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee."

Glory be to thee, who sufferedst thyself to be called a malefactor; and to be treated as such, that they who are malefactors indeed, might be pardoned and saved.

Verse 32. " That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, signifying what death he should die."

It was long before appointed by the determinate counsel of God, that thou shouldst die the death of the cross; that thou shouldst be scourged, and have thy hands and feet pierced. Therefore the Jews could not put thee to any other death, though they had more than once attempted it. In this we see thy words, and the former scriptures evidently fulfilled, to the confirmation of the faith of thy divine mission. O give faith in thy blood, crucified Saviour!

Verse

Verse 33. " Pilate asked Jesus, art thou the  
" king of the Jews."

We adore thy wisdom and truth in answering this question. Thou first askedst Pilate, " Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" For, if he meant it in the sense of the Jews, " The Messiah, the king of Israel," it was true. But if he meant a temporal prince, such as he himself was acquainted with, this was not thy character. Therefore thou answeredst him, " My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

Blessed be thy name, that thy kingdom is not of this world! In the kingdoms of this world, the poor and the oppressed are often neglected. They cannot find admittance into the king's presence with their petitions. But thou makest them welcome at all times. " Thou savest the children of the needy, and breakest in pieces the oppressor." In the courts of the kings of this world there is much flattery, and deceit, and carnal policy, and wickedness. But thy scepter is a scepter of righteousness; thy kingdom is righteousness, and peace, and joy of the Holy Ghost.

The laws of earthly kingdoms are instituted by men, and are sometimes unjust or rigorous; but all thy laws are from heaven, and are written upon the hearts of thy subjects by the Spirit of love. The kingdoms of this world affect outward pomp and splendor, to dazzle the eye, but thy subjects are adorned with the graces of thy Spirit,



and are cloathed with humility. Temporal kingdoms are protected by arms, and they make war upon one another, but the weapons of thy kingdom are spiritual; and thou makest the wolf to dwell with the lamb, and the leopard to lie down with the kid, and a little child to lead them.— The kingdoms of this world have high walls and towers for their security; but in thy kingdom “salvation is appointed for bulwarks:” And, “the divine presence is a wall of fire round about.” The kingdoms of this world have their bounds, and are confined to particular nations; but all nations shall serve thee; and all kings shall fall down before thee. To the kingdoms of this world there is an appointed time; but thy dominion shall never pass away; thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.

O heavenly king! “to this end wast thou born, and for this cause camest thou into the world, that thou shouldst bear witness unto the truth: every one that is of the truth, heareth thy voice.” What thou hast seen and heard with thy Father, that thou testifiest. Thou knowest the Father. Thou knowest what is in man. Thou knowest all things. Thou canst not be deceived thyself, nor canst thou deceive any; for thou art true and faithful, the truth itself. O give us that truth in the inward parts, that thorough honesty and integrity, which will dispose us to hearken to thy voice in all things, and not to a lying devil, or a vain deluding world.

## C H A P. XIX.

Verse 5. "Behold the man."

How every circumstance contributed to increase thy sufferings! Pilate was convinced of thy innocency; yet he ordered thee to be scourged, thinking thereby to appease the fury of the people. Then wast thou brought forth wearing a crown of thorns and a purple robe; and Pilate said unto them, "Behold the man." These were probably words of pity and contempt, pointing thee out as one, against whom it was not worth their while to have so much resentment. But we willingly hear them in another sense. Yes, Lord; we would behold thee bleeding and swollen with stripes; crowned with a mock-robe, and wearing a thorny crown; yet thy marred countenance discovering the gracious dispositions of thy heart; outwardly a worm, and no man, but inwardly all divine. We would behold thee, O Son of God, equal with thy Father, suffering in this manner for the sins of man, suffering for us. O glorious object, far worthier of contemplation than all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. O give us so to behold thee, that we may be saved.

Verse 9. "Pilate saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou?"

The Jews had said, "By our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." Thou didst indeed declare thyself to be the Son of God, and claim the honour due to God. For thou saidst, "The Father hath com-

“mitted all judgment to the Son, that all men  
“should honour the Son, even as they honour  
“the Father.” And the truth of thy declaration,  
and the justice of thy claim, was proved by thy  
works which the Father gave thee to finish; and  
by his voice from heaven. We desire therefore  
with our whole hearts to acknowledge thee the  
Son of God, and God blessed for ever. When  
Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid,  
and going again into the judgment-hall, saith un-  
to thee, “Whence art thou?” But thou gavest  
him no answer. May we humbly enquire, Lord,  
into the reason of thy silence? Perhaps it is not  
necessary that we should know it. It is sufficient  
that thy perfect wisdom saw it proper at this time.  
One reason might be, that thou wouldst do no-  
thing to hinder thy crucifixion. Thou hadst also  
given Pilate an answer formerly, concerning the  
nature of thy kingdom, to which he had not paid  
due regard, and thereby increased his guilt. And  
thou, no doubt, sawest at this time the naughti-  
ness of his heart, which soon discovered itself by  
his indignation at thy silence; and his boasting  
that he had power over thee. But to this boasting  
thou answeredst, “That he could have no power  
“at all against thee, except it were given him  
“from above.” Here, notwithstanding thy deep  
humiliation, thou shewedst thyself superior to thy  
haughty judge. Thou gavest him to understand  
that thou lookedst beyond him to the hand of thy  
Father, by whose determinate counsel and fore-  
knowledge all this was done. And to let him see  
that thou wast Lord of his conscience, and yet  
wast not moved by his provoking behaviour, to  
esteem his sin greater than that of others, thou  
addest, “He that delivered me unto thee hath  
the greater sin.” Surely, Lord, the sin of Pilate

was

was very great; but it appears from these words of thine, that the sin of Judas, and the sin of Caiaphas and his brethren, and the sin of the Jews, was greater; for they had access to know thee, from the scriptures, to be the Messiah, which Pilate had not, though he might have known thy divine mission from thy works. O save us from acting against our light, as Pilate did, for the fear or pleasure of men. And above all, save us from imitating the unbelief, and hardness, and persecuting malice of these other greater sinners. To what an amazing height did their hatred rise, when, though the Roman yoke was odious and oppressive to them, they fled to it, to avoid thine, saying, "We have no king but Cæsar:" And, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." Ah, hypocritical and detestable profession of loyalty to Cæsar! A few years after this, rather than submit to Cæsar, they brought upon their nation the unparalleled calamities which thou hadst foretold with tears. Thus it fares with those sinners against their own souls who refuse to have thee to reign over them. Lord Jesus, reign in our hearts. Let nothing have any influence there, but in subordination to thee.

Verse 26, 27. "Jesus commits his mother to his beloved disciple."

Though thou wast dying a painful death, thou wast not unmindful of the temporal concerns of thy friends. May we imitate thy blessed example. Happy disciple, whom thou so lovedst, and so honouredst, and to whom thou gavest such a convincing proof of thy knowledge of his love to thee. No wonder that he readily undertook the charge. Grant, O Lord, that we may account it



an honour to relieve and comfort any who belong to thee ; for thou lookest on every one of them as thy mother, and sister, and brother.

Verse 30. " It is finished."

When all the other predictions concerning thy sufferings were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, thou saidst, " I thirst : " And in this thy thirst, occasioned by the loss of blood, and the pain of crucifixion, they gave thee vinegar to drink. When therefore thou hadst received the vinegar, thou saidst, " It is finished ; " and bowing thy head, gavest up thy Spirit to thy Father. All thy sufferings for the glory of God, and the salvation of men, were now over. Compleat satisfaction was made to justice. The price of redemption of souls was now fully paid. Glory to thy divine constancy, patience, and love, which continued firm to the last. O merciful Saviour, though men gave thee in thy thirst vinegar to drink, thou dost not render evil for evil ; thou sayest, " I will give to him that is a " thirst, of the fountain of the water of life, freely." Had it not been for thy love, we should have in vain sought a drop of water to cool our tongues in hell. But we trust in thee, who sufferedst for us, and didst not give over till thou couldst say, " It " is finished."

Verse 34. " One of the soldiers with a spear  
" pierced his side."

We adore divine providence in what befel thee immediately after thy death. The soldiers brake the legs of those that were crucified with thee. But when they came to thee, they forbore, observing

serving that thou wast dead already. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced thy side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. Thus the reality of thy death was put beyond all doubt, and the scripture was fulfilled, "A bone of him shall not be broken." And again, another scripture saith, "They shall look on him whom they pierced." Glory be to God, for this double stream of blood and water from thy wounded side. O cleanse us, by this blood, from the guilt and pollution of all our sins; and purify our whole souls and bodies by this sanctifying water. It is said thy people, of old, drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. May we drink of this heavenly water, through the whole of our pilgrimage. We have pierced thee, Lord Jesus, by our sins. Oh pour upon us the Spirit of grace and of supplication, that we may look on thee with the eye of faith, and may mourn as one mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his first born. We bless thee, that in the day of pentecost this was fulfilled in many of thy persecutors and murderers. O hasten the happy time of their national conversion, when there shall be a great mourning among them, and great joy in heaven upon their repentance.

## C H A P. XX.

Verse 1 to 18. "Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre."

How comfortable is it to see one who was possessed by seven evil spirits, now so filled with thy love! She comes to the sepulchre, when it was yet dark.

Love to thee gets the better of all her fears. When she misses thy sacred body, she runs and complains to every one she meets with ; “ They “ have taken away my Lord, and I know not “ where they have laid him.” She speaks thus first to Peter and John, and then to the angels ; and then to thee, whom she took for the keeper of the garden. When the rest of the disciples were gone, she continues weeping at the sepulchre ; and not knowing well what she said, in the transport of her affection she cries, “ Sir, if thou “ hast born him hence, tell me where thou hast “ laid him, and I will take him away :” Thou sufferedst her not long to continue in this perplexing distress : but discoveredst thyself to her, calling her by her name in a familiar manner. With what transport of joy did she answer, “ Rabboni, “ my great master !” Yet thou wouldst not allow Mary to lose time in expressing her affection to thee any further, but commandedst her to go immediately to the other disciples with this gracious message ; “ Go to my brethren, and say unto “ them, I ascend unto my Father and your “ Father, and to my God and your God.” Thus she, out of whom went seven devils, was made an apostle to the apostles themselves. O loving Saviour, what words are these ! “ My “ brethren ;” and “ My Father and your Father ; my God and your God.” All the wealth, and pleasure, and greatness, and glory, and happiness of this world vanishes into smoke when compared with this. Give us this, and we desire no more of any thing.

Verse 2 to 7. " Peter and the disciples whom  
" Jesus loved, go to the sepulchre."

Peter had shamefully denied thee; but he had got repentance, and now associated with the other disciples, particularly with him whom thou lovedst, who did not refuse his company. O give us the same loving and forgiving temper, which was in thy beloved apostle. When they went to the sepulchre, they saw thy grave-cloaths lying in order, without the least marks of hurry or confusion. For thou hadst power to lay down thy life, and thou hadst power to take it again. Nor could any created force give thee the least disturbance or interruption in thy doing it.

Verse 19. " The same day at evening, being  
" the first day of the week."

It is observable that several of thy appearances were upon the first day of the week, the day of thy resurrection, called by thy beloved disciple, the Lord's day. May we rejoice to assemble with thy friends, in order to meet with our risen redeemer, on thy day. May it ever be to us the most joyful day of the seven.

Verse 20. " He shewed them his hands and  
" his side."

How kind were thy expressions and actions to those who had been so unkind to thee! " Peace  
" be unto you." And then thou shewedst them the marks of thy crucifixion remaining in thy glorified body. Divinely glorious scars! which proclaim to the saints in heaven thy dying love,  
and



and to thy Father thy filial obedience and sacrifice, to all eternity.

Verse 20 to 23. "Then were the disciples  
"glad when they saw the Lord."

Thy words were now fulfilled, "I will see  
"you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and  
"your joy no man taketh from you." O give  
us the heavenly joy of seeing thee now by faith;  
and bring us to see thy face in glory at the right  
hand of thy Father, which will make us glad be-  
yond what we can now conceive. Then thou saidst  
to them again, "Peace be unto you: as my Father  
"hath sent me, even so send I you. And when  
"thou hadst said this, thou breathedst on them,  
"and saidst unto them, Receive ye the Holy  
"Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are re-  
"mitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye re-  
"tain, they are retained." May we not here ob-  
serve, Lord, a resemblance betwixt the opera-  
tions in the natural life, and in the spiritual? It is  
written, that when thou formedst man at first, thou  
breathedst into his nostrils the breath of life. Now  
thou givest both the natural and spiritual life in a  
more secret and invisible manner. Lord, give us  
thy Holy Spirit to apply the whole of thy re-  
demption to our souls; and to enable us to glori-  
fy thee in the way thou wouldst have us.  
Though thy first disciples, to whom thou gavest  
the extraordinary privilege of remitting or retain-  
ing sins, are now no more in this world; yet,  
blessed be thy name, thy word still remains as an  
infallible standard by which sins are remitted or  
retained. O let us see by thy word, that our sins  
are remitted, and we shall be happy; and con-  
vince all whose sins are retained by it, that they  
are

are under condemnation; and give them repentance and faith in thee.

Verse 24. "Thomas's backwardness to believe."

Thomas would not believe the joint testimony of his fellow disciples. He would not believe his own eyes, except he could also feel the marks of thy wounds. How obstinate and inexcusable was he in this! yet thou turnedst it, as usual, into good; making it a proof of the reality of thy resurrection, and taking occasion from it to shew thy wonderful condescension and grace. Thou soon appearedst again in the midst of thy disciples, when the doors were shut; and blessing them in thy wonted manner, thou saidst to the unbelieving Thomas, in his own words, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." He being filled with surprize, and joy, and admiration at thy goodness to him, cried out, "My Lord, and my God." O Saviour, thou knowest what hinders us from adopting his words in the most joyful sense. We do not doubt of thy resurrection, nor of thy being the Christ, and the Son of God; nor of thy ability and willingness to save us; (though perhaps we have not a right belief of these great truths; Lord, give it to us); but our great doubt is, whether we have that faith in thee, to which the promise of salvation is made; and whether we do those things which thou wouldst have us to do; and whether our conversion be sincere and full: in short, whether we have an interest in thee as our Saviour.

We

We can say, Thou art our Lord, who hast an absolute right to all we have and are, and to dispose of us as thou pleasest. We bless thee, we can say farther, Thou art our God, whom we worship with the Father and Holy Spirit, the one true God, in whom alone our souls can find rest. Thou art our Lord, whom we desire to serve. Thou art our God, whose favour, and image, and enjoyment, we see to be better than a thousand worlds. Thou art our God, who hast done great things for us; who hast called us out of a state of dreadful sin and wretchedness, into the hope we now enjoy. Thou art our Lord and our God in this sense, that we can go nowhere but to thee. If we perish, we will perish calling on thee, and will acknowledge, that if we are miserable, it is owing to our not hearkening to thy voice in time. But, O merciful Saviour, we have some hope thou wilt not let us perish. If it be for thy glory then, that we should be able (who have been such great sinners) thus to speak, we beg thou wouldst make us to say with well-grounded confidence, "Thou art our Lord and our God," who hast given us an undoubted interest in thy salvation, and "from whose love neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, can separate us." O when shall it once be?

Verse 29. "Blessed are they that have not seen,  
"and yet have believed."

These words discourage us from seeking after extraordinary signs. May we content ourselves with thy holy word, and with the experiences that are common to our Fellow-Christians. Give us, though we have not seen, yet to believe. Give us rightly to believe, that thou art the Christ,  
the

the Son of God ; and, believing, to have life through thy name.

## C H A P. XXI.

Verse 1—15. “ Jesus appears to the disciples  
“ upon the shore.”

Lord, be pleased to teach us what we ought to learn from this history. Seven of thy disciples were witnesses of this appearance, among whom were Peter, who had denied thee ; Thomas, who was so backward to believe thy resurrection ; Nathanael, a man without guile ; and thy beloved disciple John. “ They were together.” Grant that we may love the company of thy disciples. It is good to be with them. “ Peter proposed to go “ a fishing.” The rest readily agreed to go with him ; probably, that they might not be idle, and might get something for their subsistence, without being troublesome to others. “ But that night “ they caught nothing.” Let us not be surprized, though the lawful endeavours of thy disciples to get an honest livelihood are not always successful : thou wilt not, however, leave them destitute : thou canst provide for them in a way they little expect. After they had passed the night in labour and fasting, when the morning came, thou appearedst to them on the shore, but they knew thee not. Then thou saidst to them, “ Children, “ have ye any meat ?” Thou knewest how it was with them, but thou wouldst have them to confess their necessities to thee. Upon which thou directedst them to “ cast the net on the right “ side of the ship, and they should find. They “ cast therefore, and now they were not able to  
I “ draw



“ draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore  
 “ that disciple whom thou lovedst said to Peter,  
 “ It is the Lord.” O blessed Saviour, give us  
 to love thee as this disciple did. They who love  
 thee most, are the first to discover thee : thou  
 manifestest thyself to them sooner than to others.  
 He immediately told Peter, who he knew would  
 rejoice at the news. No sooner did Peter hear  
 that it was the Lord, than he cast himself into  
 the sea, through eagerness to go to thee. Once  
 when he walked upon the waves, thou stretchedst  
 out thy hand to prevent his sinking : now he  
 casts himself into the water, thinking, perhaps, if  
 the Lord suffer me to perish, I deserve it ; but I  
 will venture every thing to go to him. Yet this  
 earnest desire is mixed with reverence : he would  
 not appear before thee naked, as he had been at  
 work, but girt his fisher’s coat unto him. Thus  
 he hastened to come to thee before any of the rest,  
 to testify, as it were, his sorrow and self-indig-  
 nation for denying thee, and that he could not  
 be happy but in returning to seek thy mercy.  
 When at the first thou gavest him a miraculous  
 draught of fishes, he fell down at thy knees, say-  
 ing, “ Depart from me, for I am a sinful man,  
 O Lord ! ” But now he had learned, that the best  
 and safest way a sinner can take, is to run to thee  
 as fast as possible. The look which thou gavest  
 him when he was denying thee, was probably still  
 in his mind, and encouraged him to make this  
 haste. May all who have sinned like him, have  
 grace to follow the example of his repentance.

When the disciples were come to land they  
 saw a dinner prepared for them ; yet thou wouldst  
 have them to bring of the fish which they had  
 now caught. Here again Peter distinguished him-  
 self by his forwardness to execute thy commands.

When

When he was first called to the apostleship, thou saidst to him, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." A little after thy ascension, thou madest him an instrument of catching in the gospel net three thousand souls at once.

How kind and familiar was thy invitation to those who had so lately forsaken thee! "Come and dine." None of them durst ask thee, "Who art thou?" knowing that it was the Lord. Thou then comest and takest bread, and givest them, and fish likewise. Thy presence, Lord, made this plain fare far preferable to the most sumptuous feast. Blessed be thy name, tho' the heavens have now received thy bodily presence, thou still holdest spiritual communion with thy disciples, and sayest, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Happy the souls to whom this is fulfilled in partaking of thy ordinances. But O how joyful above all will it be to meet with thee in heaven, after toiling and tossing all night upon this sea, when that sweet morning comes, to see thee upon the calm and pleasant shore of eternity, and to hear thee say, "Come and dine." Come into the mansions I have prepared for you in my Father's house, and I will feed you with the hidden manna, and with the fruits of the tree of life. Thou wilt indeed thus entertain unworthy sinners, and some who have denied thee, and forsaken thee, whom thy grace hath brought back. Surely, when they sit at thy table in thy kingdom, they may well, like Joseph's brethren, marvel one at another.

Verse 15—18. "The Lord questions Peter  
 " about his love to him, and commands  
 " him to feed his sheep."

After thou hadst dined with them, thou saidst to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" He answered, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." But he did not add, "more than these." He durst no longer compare himself with others, as he had boastingly done before his fall: he left that to thy judgment. He now also understood, that he did not know himself so well as thou knewest him; therefore he appealed to thee, "Thou knowest that I love thee." Thou repliedst to him, "Feed my lambs." Thus thou restoredst him to the pastoral office, of which he had rendered himself unworthy, and intimatedst to him and his fellow-apostles, that the best way to testify their love to thee, was by taking care of thy flock. "Feed my lambs." Thou hast a particular regard to the young and the weak: thou carriest the lambs in thy bosom, and them thou first commendest to the care of thy apostle, willing him to feed them as "thy lambs," from a regard to their Master. And it appears by his exhortation to other pastors afterwards, what impression thy words made upon his heart, when he says, "Feed the flock of God as much as in you is; taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." O give grace to all thy servants in the gospel ministry so to do.

Thou

Thou askedst him a second time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" and a second time he answered, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." And thou repliedst again, "Feed my sheep."

And because he had thrice denied thee, thou askedst him a third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" He was grieved at thy asking it a third time; afraid, perhaps, that thou sawest he was again to deny thee, or that he had not that love in his heart which he imagined he had. But he could by thy grace appeal to thee once more in the strongest terms, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee;" and thou didst once more command him to feed thy sheep.

Thus in few words, and with great solemnity, thou madest this apostle publicly profess his repentance, both for denying thee, and for preferring himself to his fellow-apostles; and gavest him the pastoral office in such a way, as to make them all sensible, that if they loved thee, they should testify it in their care of thy flock.

O Lord Jesus, grant to all thy servants in the gospel ministry to be able to say, that "Thou, who knowest all things, knowest that they love thee," for thy own infinite amiableness, and because thou hast loved their souls, and given thyself for them. O give them grace to feed thy lambs, to feed thy sheep; to feed them with thy pure word and ordinances; to give every one their portion; and to warn them against what may be hurtful. Not lording it over them, but studying to give them an example of humility, and of the whole Christian temper and practice. O make them faithful and diligent in this important work. May thy words still sound in their  
Y ears,



ears, " Lovest thou me ? feed my lambs, feed  
" my sheep."

Verse 18, 19. " Peter's death foretold."

Peter was not to look for worldly ease or honour in the execution of his office ; but, on the contrary, to expect great sufferings in his old age, and to die a violent death : for thou saidst to him, " When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, " and walkedst whither thou wouldst ; but when " thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch out thy " hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry " thee whither thou wouldst not." And this thou spakest, signifying by what death he should glorify God. Happy are they who glorify thee in their death, whatever death they die ! Lord, grant that all thy pastors may be prepared in mind for suffering, and may not think it much, though in their old age their other troubles increase ; yea, though they should be called to lay down their lives in thy cause. A little while in heaven will make an ample amends for all.

Verse 22. " What is that to thee ? follow thou  
" me."

When thou hadst signified to Peter the troubles that were awaiting him, thou addedst, " Follow " me." These were thy words to him when thou first calledst him to be thy disciple, and they were renewed on this occasion, to shew, perhaps, that thou still ownedst him for thine ; and perhaps also to intimate, that he was to resemble thee in the manner of his death. They seem also to have been an invitation to him just now to follow thee in the way, and to enjoy more of thy company

before thou disappearedst. In every view it was a peculiar honour put upon this apostle, when thou saidst to him, "Follow me;" and therefore, he turning about, and seeing the disciple whom thou lovedst following, who used to enjoy the greatest intimacy with thee, saith, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" But this enquiry thou discouragedst, saying, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." How full of instruction, O Lord, are these words! O write them on our hearts, and help us to apply them to every case to which thou wouldst have them applied. Surely, there are many things with which we have nothing to do; but all thy disciples are called to mind one thing, and that is, "to follow thee." O give us to walk in this path of peace, and we shall be happy.

Verse 23. "The report that John should not die."

Here is something very remarkable, that a saying should go abroad among thy disciples in the very first age of the New Testament church, founded upon a wrong interpretation of thy words. This mistake is here rectified by adducing the words themselves. Does it not hence appear, Lord, that Christians may fall into mistakes, by not keeping close enough to thy words? and that therefore the safest way, for the most part, in delivering scripture truths, is to keep as near as possible to scripture expression. Help, Lord, all thy servants rightly to consider this.

Verse

Verse 25. "There are also many other things  
"which Jesus did."

Here is another instance of the necessity of submitting to thy infinite wisdom, as to what thou art pleased to reveal, and what thou art pleased to keep secret. Many prayers thou prayedst to thy Father; many words thou spakest to men; many actions thou didst, during thy abode upon earth, which are not recorded: and yet thou never spakest a word, or didst an action unworthy of God; and therefore one would think, that it would have been well if every particular had been made known to all human generations. But thou hast seen fit, that but a small part, comparatively, should be recorded (upon earth.) Adored be thy goodness for what thou hast made known; adored be thy wisdom for what thou hast kept concealed. As the sacred records are few, may we be careful to be acquainted with every part of them, and make them our daily meditation.



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